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WITH ETHAN ALLEN AT TICONDEROGA

W. BERT FOSTER

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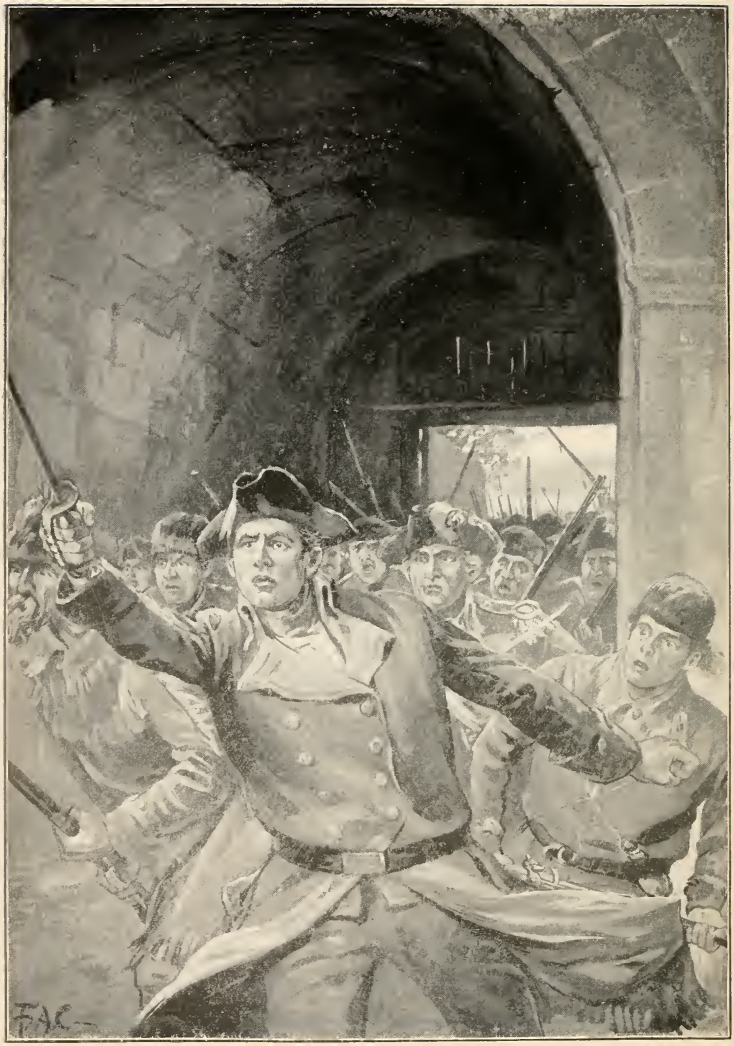

"Forward!" He Shouted

With ETHAN ALLEN at TICONDEROGA

by
W. Bert Foster
Author of
"With Washington
at Valley Forge" etc

Illustrated
by
F. A. Carter.

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With Ethan Allen at Ticonderoga

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WITH ETHAN ALLEN AT TICONDEROGA

CHAPTER I

A BOY OF THE WILDERNESS

The forest was still. A calm lay upon its vast extent, from the green-capped hills in the east to the noble river which, fed by the streams so quietly meandering through the pleasantly wooded country, found its way to the sea where the greatest city of the New World was destined to stand. The clear, bell-like note of a waking bird startled the morning hush. A doe and her fawn that had couched in a thicket seemed roused to activity by this early matin and suddenly showered the short turf with a dewy rain from the bushes which they disturbed as they leaped away toward the "lick." The gentle creatures first slaked their thirst at the

margin of the creek hard by and then stood a moment with outstretched nostrils, snuffing the wind before tasting the salt impregnated earth trampled as hard as adamant by a thousand hoofs. The fawn dropped its muzzle quickly; but the mother, not so well assured, snuffed again and yet again.

In the wilderness, before the white man came, there were to be found paths made by the wild folk going to and from their watering places and feeding grounds, and paths made by the red hunter and warrior. Although hundreds of deer traveled to this lick yearly, they had not originally made the trail. It was an ancient Indian runaway, for the creek was fordable near this point. The tribesmen had used it for generations until it was worn almost knee-deep in the forest mould, but wide enough only to be traveled in single file. Along this ancient trail, and approaching the lick with infinite caution, came a boy of thirteen, bearing a heavy rifle.

Although so young, Enoch Harding was well built, and the play of his hardened muscles was easily observed under his tight-

fitting, homespun garments. The circumstances of border life in the eighteenth century molded hardy men and sturdy boys. His face was as brown as a berry and his eyes clear and frankly open. The brown hair curled tightly above his perspiring brow, from which his old otter-skin cap was thrust back. His coming to the bank of the wide stream was attended with all the care and silent observation of an Indian on the trail. He set his feet so firmly and with such precision that not even the rustle of a leaf or the crackling of a twig would have warned the sharpest ear of his approach. The wind was in his favor, too, blowing from the creek toward him. The doe, which he could not yet see but the patter of whose light hoofs he had heard as she trotted with her fawn to the drinking place, could not possibly have discovered his presence; yet she continued to raise her muzzle at intervals and snuff the wind suspiciously.

The dark aisles of the forest, as yet unillumined by the sun whose crimson banners would soon be flung above the mountain-tops, seemed deserted. In the distance the birds

were beginning their morning song; but here the shadow of the mountains lay heavy upon wood and stream and the feathered choristers awoke more slowly. The two deer at the lick and the boy who now, from behind the massive bole of a tree, surveyed them, seemed the only living objects within view.

Enoch raised his heavy rifle, resting the barrel against the tree trunk, and drew bead at the doe's side. He was chancing a long shot, rather than taking the risk of approaching any nearer to the animals. He had seen that the doe was suspicious and she might be off in a flash into the thicker forest beyond unless he fired at once. Had he been more experienced he would have wondered what had made the creature suspicious, his own approach to the lick being quite evidently undiscovered. But he thought only of getting a perfect sight and that the larder at home was empty. And this last fact was sufficient to make the boy's aim certain, his principal care being to waste no powder and to bring down his game with as little loss of time as might be.

The next moment the heavy muzzle-loading

gun roared and the buckshot sped on its mission. The mother deer gave a convulsive spring forward, thus warning the poor fawn, which disappeared in the brush like a flash of brown light. The doe dropped in a heap upon the sward and Enoch, flushed with success, ran forward to view his prize. In so doing, however, the boy forgot the first rule of the border ranger and hunter. He did not reload his weapon.

Stumbling over the widely spread roots of the great tree behind which he had hidden, he reached the opening in the forest where the tragedy had been enacted, and would have been on his knees beside the dead deer in another instant had not an appalling sound stayed him. A scream, the like of which once heard is never to be forgotten, thrilled him to the marrow. He started back, casting his glance upward. There was a rustling in the thick branches of the tree beneath which the doe had fallen. Again the maddened scream rang out and a tawny body flashed from concealment in the foliage.

"A catamount!" Enoch shouted, and seeing the creature fairly over his head in its

flight through the air, he leaped away toward the creek, his feet winged with fear. Of all the wild creatures of the Northern wilderness this huge cat was most to be avoided. It would not hesitate to attack man when hungry, and maddened and disappointed as this one was, its charge could not be stayed. At the instant when the beast was prepared to leap upon either the doe or her fawn, Enoch's shot had laid the one low and frightened the other away. His appearance upon the scene attracted the attention of the cat and had given it a new object of attack. Possibly the creature did not even notice the fall of the deer, being now bent upon vengeance for the loss of its prey, for which it had doubtless searched unsuccessfully all the night through.

The young hunter was in a desperate situation. His gun was empty and the prospect of an encounter with the catamount would have quenched the courage of the bravest. And to run from it was still more foolish, yet this was the first thought which inspired him. The creek was beyond and although the ford was some rods above the deer-lick, he thought

to cast himself into the stream and thus escape his enemy. The beast, possessing that well-known trait of the feline tribe which causes it to shrink from water, might not follow him into the creek.

A long log, the end of which had caught upon the bank, swung its length into the stream, forming a boom against which light drift-stuff had gathered; the swift current foamed about the timber as though vexed at this delay to its progress. Upon the tree Enoch leaped and ran to the further extremity. His feet, shod in home-made moccasins of deer-hide, did not slip on this insecure footing; but his weight on the stranded log set it in motion. The timber began to swing off from the shore and one terrified glance about him assured the boy that he was at a most deep and dangerous part of the stream.

Although so shallow above at the ford, the bed of the creek directly below was of rock instead of gravel, and ragged boulders thrust themselves up from the depths, causing many whirlpools which dimpled the surface of the water. About the boulders the current tore, the brown froth from the angry jaws of rock

dancing lightly away upon the waves. Although even with his clothing on he might have swum in a quiet pool, to do so here would be almost impossible. The boy was between two perils!

He turned about in horror to escape the flood, and was in time to see the huge cat gain the end of the log in a single bound as it was torn from the shore by the current. There the beast crouched, less than twenty feet away, lashing its tail and snarling menace at the victim of its wrath. The situation was paralyzing. As for loading his rifle now, the boy had not the strength to do it. The fascination of the beast's blazing eyes held him motionless, like a bird charmed by the unwinking gaze of a black snake.

And Enoch Harding knew, if he knew anything, that the beast would not give him time to reload the clumsy gun. At his first movement it would spring. And if he leaped into the water, it might follow him, considering its present savage mood. He beheld its muscles, which slipped so easily under the tawny skin, knotting themselves for a spring. The forelegs were drawn up under the breast the

curved, sabre-sharp claws scratching the bark on the floating timber. In another instant the fatal leap would be made.

Never had the boy been in such danger. He did not utterly lose his presence of mind; but he was helpless. What chance had he with an empty gun before the savage brute? He seized the barrel in both hands and raised the weapon above his head. It was too heavy for him to swing with any ease, and being so would fall but lightly on the creature, did he succeed in reaching it at all. He could not hope to stun the cat at a single blow. And beside, the tree, rocking now like a water-logged canoe, made his footing more and more insecure. In a moment it would be among the boulders and at the first collision be overturned.

But he could not drag his eyes from those of the catamount. With a fierce snarl which ended in a thrilling scream, the brute cast itself into the air! At the moment it rose, exposing its lighter colored breast to view, a gun-shot shattered the silence of river and forest. The spring of the cat was not stayed, but its yell again changed—this time to a note of agony.

"Jump, lad, jump!" shouted a voice and Enoch, as though awaking from a dream, obeyed the command. He leaped sideways, and landed upon a slippery rock, falling to his knees, yet securing a hand-hold upon a protuberance. Nor did he lose hold of his gun with the other hand.

The body of the catamount landed just where he had stood; but then rolled off the log and disappeared in the rushing stream, while the timber itself crashed instantly into one of the larger boulders. Enoch staggered to his feet, his hand bleeding and also his knee, where the stocking had been torn away by the rock. The log swung broadside to the current again, and seeing his chance, the boy ran along its length and leaped from its end into comparatively shallow water under the bank.

His rescuer was at hand and dragged him, panting and exhausted, to the shore, where he fell weakly on the turf, unable for a moment to utter a word. The man who leaned over him was lean, as dark as an Indian, and in a day when smoothly shaven features were the rule, his face was marked by a tangled growth of iron-gray beard. His hair hung to the

fringed collar of his deerskin shirt, and straggled over his low brow in careless locks, instead of being tightly drawn back and fastened in a queue; and out of this wilderness of hair and beard looked two eyes as sharp as the hawk's.

He was so tall that there was a slight stoop to his shoulders as though, when he walked, he feared to collide with the branches of the trees under which he passed. Erect, he must have lacked but a few inches of seven feet and, possessing not an ounce of superfluous flesh on his big bones, his appearance was not impressive. The deerskin hunting shirt, worked in a curious pattern on the breast with red and blue porcupine quills, fitted him tightly, as did his linsey-woolsey breeches; and his thin shanks were covered with gray hose darned clumsily in more than one place. He would have been selected at first sight as a wood-ranger and hunter, and carried his long rifle with more grace than he ever held plough or wielded reaping-hook.

Indeed, Josiah Bolderwood was one of that strange class of white men so frequently found during the pioneer era of our Eastern coun-

try. He seemed to have been born, as he often said himself, with a gun in his hands. His mother, lying on her couch behind the double wall of a blockhouse in the Maine wilderness, loaded spare guns for her husband and his comrades while they beat off the yelling redskins, when Josiah was but a few days old. He was a ranger and trapper from the beginning. He had slept under the canopy of the forest more often than in a bed and beneath a roof made by men's hands. From early youth he had hunted all through the northern wilderness, and had been no more able to tie himself to a farm, and earn his bread by tilling the soil, than an Indian. Indeed, he was more of an Indian than a white man in habits, tastes, and feelings; he lacked only that marvelous appreciation of signs and sounds in the forest, in which the white can never hope to equal the red man.

"Lad, that was a near chance for you!" he said, when he saw that Enoch was practically unhurt. "The Almighty surely brought me to this lick jest right. I knowed you was here when I heard the shot; but as your marm said you'd gone for a deer, I didn't

s'pose you'd be huntin' for catamounts, too! Howsomever, somethin' tol' me ter run when I heard your gun, an' run I did."

"I didn't shoot at the wild-cat, 'Siah," said the boy, getting upon his feet. "See yonder; there's the doe I knocked over. But the critter was after her, too, and it madded him when I fired, I s'pose."

"And ye didn't git your gun loaded again!" exclaimed Bolderwood.

His young friend blushed with shame. "I—I didn't think. I ran over to look at the doe, and the critter jumped at me outer the tree. Then I got on the log and he follered me——"

"Jonas Harding's boy'd oughter known better than that," declared the old ranger, with some vexation.

"I know it, 'Siah. Poor father told me 'nough times never to move outer my tracks till I had loaded again. An' I reckon this'll be a lesson for me. I—I ain't got over it yet."

"Wal," said Bolderwood, "while you git yer breath, Nuck, I'll flay that critter and hang her up. I'm in somethin' of a hurry this mornin'; but as the widder's needin' the

meat, we won't leave the carcass to the varmints."

"You've been to my house, 'Siah?" cried Enoch, following him across the little glade.

"Yes. Jest stopped there on my way down from Manchester. That's how I knew you was over here hunting."

"But if you're in a hurry, leave me to do that," said the boy. "I'm all right now."

"You're in as big a hurry as I be, Nuck," returned the ranger, with a grim smile. "I'm going to take you with me over to Mr. James Breckenridge's. Ev'ry gun we kin git may count to-day, lad."

"Did mother say I could go, 'Siah?" cried the youngster, with undoubted satisfaction in his voice. "You're the best man that I know to get her to say 'yes'!"

Bolderwood looked up from his work with much gravity. "This ain't no funnin' we're goin' on, Nuck. It's serious business. You kin shoot straight, an' that's why I begged for ye. This may be the most turrible day you ever seen, my lad, for the day on which a man or boy sees bloodshed for the fust time, is a mem'ry that he takes with him to the grave."

CHAPTER II

ENOCH HARDING FEELS HIMSELF A MAN

Although Enoch Harding had not grasped the serious nature of the matter which the ranger's words suggested, there was something he had realized, however, and this thought sent the blood coursing through his veins with more than wonted vigor and his eyes sparkled. He was a man. He was to play a man's part on this day and the neighbors—even the old ranger who had stood his friend on so many occasions already—recognized him as the head of the family.

Bolderwood saw this thought expressed in his face and without desiring to "take him down" and humble his pride, wished to show him the serious side of the situation. To this end he spoke upon another subject, beginning: "D'ye remember where we be, Nuck? 'Member this place? Seems strange that you sh'd have such a caper here with that catamount after what happened only last

spring, doesn't it?" He glanced keenly at young Harding and saw that his words had at once the desired effect. Enoch stood up, the skinning-knife in his hand, and looked over the little glade. In a moment his brown eyes filled with tears, which rolled unchastened down his smooth cheeks.

"Aye, Nuck, a sorry day for you an' yourn when Jonas Harding met his death here. And a sorry day was it for me, too, lad. I loved him like a brother. He an' I, Nuck, trapped this neck of woods together before the settlement was started. We knew how rich the land was and naught but the wars with the redskins an' them French kept us from comin' here long before the Robinsons. Jonas wouldn't come 'less it was safe to bring your mother an' you—an' he was right. There's little good in a man's roamin' the world without a wife an' fireside ter tie to. I was sayin' the same to neighbor Allen last week, an' he agreed—though he's wuss off than me, for he has a family back in Litchfield an' is under anxiety all the time to bring them here, if the Yorkers but leave us in peace. As for me—well, a tough old knot like me ain't fit to

marry an' settle down. I'm wuss nor an Injin."

It is doubtful if the boy heard half this monologue. He stood with thoughtful mien and his eyes were still wet when Bolderwood's words finally aroused him. "Do you know, Nuck, there's many a time I stop at this ford and think of your father's death? There's things about it I'll never understand, I reckon."

Enoch Harding started and flashed a quick glance at his friend. "What things?" he asked.

"Well, lad, mainly that Jonas Harding, who was as quick on the trail and as good a woodsman as myself, should be worsted by a mad buck; it seems downright impossible, Nuck."

"I know. But there could be no mistake about it, 'Siah. There were the hoof-marks—and there was no bullet wound on the body, only those gashes made by the critter's horns. Simon Halpen ——"

Bolderwood raised his hand quickly. "Nay, lad! don't utter evil even about that Yorker. We all know he was anigh here

when your father died. He was seen at Bennington the night before, and later crossed James Breckenridge's farm on his way to Albany. Black enemy as he is to you and yourn, there's naught to be gained by accusing him of Jonas' death. It would be impossible. There was not, as you say, a bullet wound upon your father's body. There was not a mark of man's footstep near the lick here but your father's own. How else, then, could he have been killed but by the charge of the buck?"

"You say yourself that father was far too sharp to so be taken by surprise," muttered the boy.

"Aye—that is so. But the facts are there, lad. I s'arched the ground over—I headed the band of scouts who found him—remember that! Nobody had been near the lick but Jonas. There wasn't a footmark for rods around. Even an Injin couldn't have got near enough to strike Jonas down with his gun-butt——"

"You believe that wound on his head, then, was made by no deer's antler?" exclaimed Enoch, eagerly.

"Tut, tut! You jump too quick," said Bolderwood, turning his face away. "That's never well. Allus look b'fore ye leap, Nuck. My 'pinion be that your father struck his head on a stone in falling ——"

"Where is there a stone here?" demanded the boy, with a speaking gesture of his disengaged hand. "I saw that deep wound in father's skull. I never believed a buck did that."

"And yet there was naught but the prints of the buck's hoofs in the soil here—be sure of that. The ground was trampled all about as though the fight had been desp'rate—as indeed it must have been."

"But that blow on the head?" reiterated Enoch.

"Ah, lad, I can't understand that. The wound certainly was mainly like a blow from a gun-stock," admitted Bolderwood.

"Then Simon Halpen compassed his death —I am sure of it!" cried the boy. "You well know how he hated father. Halpen would never forget the beech-sealing he got last fall. He threatened to be terribly revenged on us; and Bryce and I heard him

threaten father, too, when he fought him upon the crick bank and father tossed the Yorker into the middle of the stream."

Bolderwood chuckled. "Simon as well might tackle Ethan Allen himself as to have wrastled with Jonas," he said. . . . "But we must hurry, lad. We have work—and perhaps serious work—before us this day. It may be the battle of our lives; we may l'arn to-day whether we are to be free people here in Bennington, or are to be driven out like sheep at the command of a flunkey under a royal person who lives so far across the sea that he knows naught of, nor cares naught for us."

"You talk desp'rately against the King, Mr. Bolderwood!" exclaimed Enoch, looking askance at his companion.

"Nay—what is the King to me?" demanded the ranger, in disgust. "He would be lost in these woods, I warrant. We're free people over here; why should we bother our heads about kings and parliament? They are no good to us."

"You talk more boldly than Mr. Ethan Allen," said the boy. "He was at our house

once to talk with father. Father said he was a master bold man and feared neither the King nor the people."

"And no man need fear either if he fear God," declared the ranger, simply. "We are only seeing the beginnings of great trouble, Nuck. We may do battle to Yorkers now; perhaps we shall one day have to fight the King's men for our farms and housel-stuff. The Governor of New York is a powerful man and is friendly to men high in the King's councils, they say. This Sheriff Ten Eyck may bring real soldiers against us some day."

"You don't believe that, 'Siah?" cried the boy.

"Indeed and I do, lad," returned the ranger, rising now with the carcass of the doe flayed and ready for hanging up.

"But we'll fight for our lands!" cried Enoch. "My father fought Simon Halpen for our farm. I'll fight him, too, if he comes here and tries to take it, now father is dead."

"Mayhap this day's work will settle it for all time, Nuck," said the ranger, hopefully. "But do you shin up that sapling yonder, and bend it down. We wanter hang this carcass

where no varmit—not even a catamount—can git it."

The boy did as he was bade and soon the fruit of Enoch Harding's early morning adventure was hanging from the top of a young tree, too small to be climbed by any wild-cat and far enough from the ground to be out of reach of the wolves and foxes. "Now we'll git right out o' here, lad," Bolderwood said, picking up his rifle and starting for the ford. "We've got to hurry," and Enoch, nothing loath, followed him across the creek and into the forest on the other bank.

"Do you r'ally think there'll be fightin', Master Bolderwood?" he asked.

"I hope God'll forbid that," responded the ranger, with due reverence. "But if the Yorkers expect ter walk in an' take our farms the way this sheriff wants ter take Master Breckenridge's, we'll show 'em diff'rent!" He increased his stride and Enoch had such difficulty in keeping up with his long-legged companion that he had no breath for rejoinder and they went on in silence.

The controversy between the New York colony and the settlers of the Hampshire

Grants who had bought their farms of Governor Benning Wentworth, of New Hampshire, was a very important incident of the pre-Revolutionary period. The not always bloodless battles over the Disputed Ground arose from the claim of New York that the old patent of King Charles to the Duke of York, giving to him all the territory lying between the Connecticut River on the east and Delaware Bay on the west, was still valid north of the Massachusetts line.

In 1740 King George II had declared "that the northern boundary of Massachusetts be a similar curved line, pursuing the course of the Merrimac River at three miles distant on the north side thereof, beginning at the Atlantic Ocean and ending at a point due north of a place called Pawtucket Falls, and by a straight line from thence due west till it meets with his Majesty's other governments." Nine years later Governor Wentworth made the claim that, because of this established boundary between Massachusetts and New Hampshire, the latter's western boundary was the same as Massachusetts'—a line parallel with and twenty miles from the Hudson

River—and he informed Governor Clinton, of New York, that he should grant lands to settlers as far west as this twenty-mile line. Therewith he granted to William Williams and sixty-one others the township of Bennington (named in his honor) and it was surveyed in October of that same year. But the outbreak of the French and Indian troubles made the occupation of this exposed territory impossible until 1761, when there came into the rich and fertile country lying about what is now the town of Bennington, several families of settlers from Hardwick, Mass., in all numbering about twenty souls.

But there had been an earlier survey of the territory along Walloomscoik Creek under the old Dutch patent and in 1765 Captain Campbell, under instructions from the New York colony, attempted to resurvey this old grant. He came to the land of Samuel Robinson who, with his neighbors, drove the Yorkers off. For this Robinson and two others were carried to Albany where they were confined in the jail for some weeks and afterward fined for "rioting." At once the settlers, who had increased greatly since '61,

saw that they must present their case before the King if they would have justice rendered them; so Captain Robinson went to England to represent their side of the matter. Unfortunately he died there before completing his work.

On the part of the governors of New Hampshire and New York it was merely a land speculation, and both officials were after the fees accruing from granting the lands; whereas the settlers who had gone upon the farms, and established their families and risked their little all in the undertaking, bore the brunt of the fight. The speculators and the men they desired to place on the farms of the New Hampshire grantees, hovered along the Twenty-Mile Line, and occasionally made sorties upon the more unprotected farmers, despite the fact that the King had instructed the Governor of New York to make no further grants until the rights of the controversy should be plainly established. This settled determination of the New York authorities to drive them out convinced the men of the Grants that they must combine to defend their homes and when, early in July,

1771, news came from Albany that Sheriff Ten Eyck with a large party of armed men was intending to march to James Breckenridge's farm and seize it in the name of the New York government, the people of Bennington in town-meeting assembled determined to defend their townsman's rights.

Sheriff Ten Eyck started from Albany on the 18th of July with more than 300 men and at once the settlers began to gather near the threatened farmstead. 'Siah Bolderwood having no farm of his own, was sent through the country raising men and guns for the defense of the Breckenridge place. On his way back he had stopped for Enoch Harding and learning that the boy had gone hunting before daybreak, the ranger followed him, arriving at the deer-lick in time to render important assistance in the dramatic scene just pictured. After crossing the creek at the spot where the boy's father had met his frightful and mysterious death a few months before, the two volunteers, while still the day was new, reached the place of the settlers' gathering.

CHAPTER III

THE AMBUSH

The house of James Breckenridge was built at the foot of a slight ridge of land running east and west, which ridge was heavily wooded. It was only a mile from the Twenty-Mile Line and therefore particularly open to attack by the New York authorities. Once before had an attempt been made by the grasping land speculators of the sister colony to oust its rightful owner, but at that time naught but a wordy controversy had ensued, whereas the present attack bade fair to be more serious. Breckenridge had sent his family to the settlement in expectation of this trouble, while he and his neighbors made ready to meet the sheriff and his army. Some of the Bennington men had arrived at the farm the evening before when news went forth that the invaders were only seven miles away, at Sancock. But the greater number of the defenders came, as did 'Siah Bolder-

wood and young Enoch Harding, soon after sun-up.

This gathering of Grants men was a memorable one. Heretofore, the clashes with the Yorkers had been little more than skirmishes in which half a dozen or a dozen men on both sides had taken part. Ethan Allen, Seth Warner, Remember Baker, and others of the more venturesome spirits, had seized some of the land-grabbers and their tools, and delivered upon their bared backs more strokes of "the twigs of the wilderness," as Allen called the blue beech rods, than the unhappy Yorkers thus treated would forget in many a day.

Ethan Allen was not as long in the settlement as many of the other men about him; but he was a born leader, and entering heart and soul into the cause of the Grants was soon acknowledged the most fiery spirit among the settlers. He was born in Litchfield, Conn., January 10, 1737, and probably came to the Hampshire Grants some time in '69. Although but thirty-four years old at this time he carried his point in most arguments regarding the well-being of the settlers, and

the Green Mountain boys, as his followers came to be called, fairly worshipped him. He was singularly handsome, with ruddy face, a ready wit, bold, unpolished, brave and almost a giant in size, for though not so tall as Seth Warner he was a much heavier and broader man.

With this company of armed men, too, was Remember Baker and his flint-lock musket, which seldom left his side waking or sleeping. Baker was the best shot on the northern border and performed feats of marksmanship with this musket that could scarce be equaled by any of our famous marksmen to-day with their improved weapons. Like the stories told of Robin Hood and his cloth-yard shafts, Baker could split a wand with a bullet and always filed the flint on his musket to a sharp point.

Other men there were in this early morning assembly destined to be heard from later in the affairs of the struggling community, but none so filled young Enoch Harding's eye as did these two. Remember Baker lived not far from the Harding farm and Enoch often went there to visit young Robert Baker,

or had Robert to stay all night with him at his home. But Enoch's closest boy friend was James Breckenridge's nephew, Lot, who was two years young Harding's senior and bore arms on this morning with the older youths and men. At once when the two spied each other they found opportunity to step aside and hold such confidences as boys are wont. Yet they were so excited by the prospect of the forthcoming battle with the Yorkers that even Nuck's adventure with the catamount was lightly passed over.

Meanwhile the settlers were divided into several bands, each captained by an efficient officer who, as 'Siah Bolderwood expressed it, "had snuffed powder." Bolderwood himself was given command of the larger number and arranged his men along the top of the ridge behind the house, where they would be concealed by the brush but could draw bead upon any person passing along the road or approaching the farmhouse. One hundred and twenty under a second leader were hidden beside the road while eighteen and an officer were stationed inside the house itself.

These arrangements had scarce been made

when a figure was descried approaching at top speed. It was a messenger to warn the settlers of the coming of the enemy. "Run down to the house, Nuck," commanded 'Siah, "and get the news for me. Keep your heads down, lads! Let them Yorkers when they come, think there ain't nobody to home!"

Enoch crept through the brush and descended the slope, appearing before the house just as the runner reached it. Coming so suddenly from behind the dwelling Enoch startled the newcomer, who sprang back and placed his hand on the hunting knife at his belt. Then, with a contemptuous grunt, the messenger passed Enoch by and lifted the latch-string which had been left hanging out. Enoch followed him into the Breckenridge house.

The runner was a tall Indian lad with a keen face and coal-black eyes and hair. Enoch knew him, for his people had camped for several years near the Harding place. But Jonas Harding had had that contempt for the red race which characterized many of the pioneer people and was the foundation for more than half the trouble between the whites

and reds; and he had often expressed this contempt before young Crow Wing, who was a chief's son although his tribe was scattered and decimated by disease. Crow Wing had hated Enoch's father for his taunts and unkind words, and now that the elder Harding was dead the young Indian considered his son cast in the same mould and worthy of the same hatred which he had borne Jonas. Naturally Enoch would have shared his parent's contempt for the Indians; but 'Siah Bolderwood, although he had camped, hunted and fought with Enoch's father for so many years, did not share the latter's opinion of the Indian character, and from him Enoch had imbibed many ideas of late which changed his opinion of the red men. There was a time, however, when the white boy had ridiculed Crow Wing and the latter had not forgotten.

Enoch watched him now with admiration. The young brave had run for several miles, having been sent out toward Sancock by one of the settlers for whom he sometimes worked, but he breathed as easily as though he had walked instead of run. When one of the men in the Breckenridge kitchen spoke to him he

answered in a perfectly even voice which showed no tremor of fatigue.

"Him sheriff march now," he said. "Mebbe t'ink um t'ree mile off."

"Where did you leave them?" asked the man in command of the house. The Indian youth told him. "And how many are there, Crow Wing?" asked another.

"Many—many!" cried the Indian, his eyes flashing. He held up both hands and spread all his ten fingers rapidly seven times. "Seventy!" cried one of the white men. "He means seven hundred," declared the leader. "That so, Crow Wing, eh?"

The Indian nodded. "Many white men—many guns," he said.

"It's not true," growled one man. "You can't believe anything an Injin says. Where would the New York sheriff get seven hundred men?"

Crow Wing's eyes flashed and he drew himself up proudly. "Me no lie—me speak true. Injin not two-tongue like white man!" he declared, with scorn, and turning his back on his traducer, stalked out of the house.

The settlers, however, paid little attention

to his departure. Enoch scuttled back to the ridge where 'Siah was waiting to hear the news. There he lay down beside Lot Breckenridge and the two boys talked earnestly as the men about them smoked or chatted while waiting for the coming of the Yorkers. Seven hundred seemed a great number to oppose. The odds would be more than two to one. Despite the ambush which had been so carefully laid for them, the sheriff and his men might fight as desperately as the settlers themselves.

"Tell ye what!" whispered Lot to Enoch, "I ain't fixin' to git shot. Marm didn't want Uncle Jim to let me come, but he said ev'ry gun'd count this mornin', so she 'lowed I'd hafter. But she says if I git shot she'll larrup me well."

Enoch chuckled. Although Lot was his senior he was more of a child than young Harding. The experiences of the last few months had aged Enoch a good deal. "My mother won't whip me if I git shot; but I mustn't run into danger, for she wouldn't know what to do without me," he said, proudly. "Bryce ain't much use yet, you know."

"Zuckers!" exclaimed Lot, "I wisht my marm was like yourn. I ain't got no father neither; but Uncle Jim don't let me do nothin', an' marm's allus wearin' out a beech twig on me."

"Guess you do somethin' for it," said Enoch, wisely.

"She'd do it jest th' same if I didn't," declared Lot, yet with perfect good-nature, as though the Widow Breckenridge's vigorous applications of the beech wand was a part of existence not to be escaped. "Gran'pap says I might's well be hung for an ole sheep as a lamb, so in course I do somethin' for it—mostly."

"If the Yorkers fight we'll hafter stay right here and shoot like the men," said Nuck, reflectively. "It'll be like the Injin fights my father and 'Siah were in. I s'pose we'll take trees, an' scatter out so't the Yorkers can't git up around us here ——"

"An' we'll raise the warwhoop an' shoot jest as fast as we kin!" exclaimed Lot, excitedly. "Crow Wing taught me the warwhoop last year. An' I know how to scalp, too."

"Oh, I wouldn't do that!" exclaimed Enoch, in horror.

"Umph! Yorkers ain't no better'n Injins, an' I'd scalp an Injin," declared Lot, bloodthirstily.

"I wouldn't. My father never did that, an' he was in the war. He said that was why the Injins warn't no better'n brute-beasts, an' didn't have no souls—'cause they scalped their enemies."

"Be still there, you youngsters!" growled 'Siah, coming down the line. "If you want to be men, l'arn to keep yer tongues quiet. Voices carry far on a day like this. What'd they say down ter the house, Nuck, 'bout the signal?"

"When they want help, or want us to sail into 'em, they're goin' to raise a red flag through the chimbley," replied the boy.

"Wal, I'm hopin' they won't fight," said the ranger, squintin' along the road below the ridge.

"Oh, I wanter see a fight—zuckers, I do!" exclaimed Lot.

"Be still, you bloodthirsty young savage!" commanded 'Siah. "You wanter shoot down men of your own color, do ye? Beech-sealin' an' duckin' is all right; but it's an awful

thing to draw bead on another white man, as ye'll l'arn some day."

"But you fought the Frenchmen with the Injins," declared Lot.

"Huh! Them's only half-bred. Frenchmen ain't no more'n savages," said 'Siah, gloomily.

An hour passed—a long, long time to the excited boys. Then, far down the winding road quite a piece of which they could observe from the summit of the wooded ridge, was seen the sudden glint of sunlight on metal. "They're coming!" the message went round and the settlers in ambush crouched more closely behind their screens and even the hearts of old Indian fighters beat faster at the nearing prospect of an engagement. James Breckenridge, Ethan Allen, and several others advanced slowly from the direction of the house to the bridge across which the Yorkers must pass. Sheriff Ten Eyck spurred forward with his personal staff to meet them. With him came the infamous John Munro who, as a justice of the peace under commission from New York, was such a thorn in the flesh of the settlers. The sheriff was a very

pompous Dutchman who believed without question in the validity of New York's jurisdiction over the Grants, and who, despite his bombastic manner, was personally no coward.

"Master Breckenridge," he said to the man whom he had come to evict from his home, "we have heard that you and your neighbors are armed to oppose the authority vested in me by His Most Gracious Majesty's colony of New York. If there be blood shed this day, it will be upon your head, for I here command you to leave this neighborhood and give over the possession of this land to its rightful owners."

"I cannot do that, Master Sheriff," said Breckenridge, quietly. "As for blood being upon my head for this day's work, you can see that I am unarmed," and he spread his hands widely. "Besides, I have nothing to do with this grant at the present time. The township of Bennington has taken the farm upon its own hands, and it will oppose your entrance with armed resistance. I have nothing to do with it."

"What is the township of Bennington?" demanded Ten Eyck. "This land belongs to the

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colony of New York under the crown. There is no town of Bennington. What legal rights have a parcel of squatters to this territory?"

Then Allen spoke. "The gods of the valleys are not the gods of the hills, Sir Sheriff. You on the other side of the Twenty-Mile Line may acknowledge the Governor of New York as your master; we on this side are a free people. We have bought our lands from the government to which they were granted by the King, and you shall not drive us from them!"

The colloquy ended and the settlers went back toward the house. After the main body of his army came up, and their numbers seemed quite as formidable as Crow Wing had reported, the sheriff pressed forward across the bridge and approached the Breckenridge dwelling. Every settler had disappeared by now and even those inside the house were still. Neither the sheriff nor his men suspected that quite three hundred guns were turned upon them and that, at the first fire, the carnage would be terrible.

"Open in the name of the law!" exclaimed Ten Eyck, thundering at the stout oak door of the house. "I demand admittance and

that all within come peaceably forth. Open, or I shall break down the door!"

There was silence for a moment, and then a voice said clearly from within: "Attempt it and you are a dead man!"

The reply angered the doughty sheriff. He was being flouted and the majesty of the law scorned. That was more than he could quietly bear. "Come out and deliver up your arms in the name o' the King!" he cried. "Ye rebels! I'll take the last of ye to Albany jail if ye do not surrender!"

At this a chorus of derisive groans issued from behind the barred door and shutters, and these sounds were echoed by other groans from the men in ambush, until the very forest itself seemed deriding the Yorkers. The knowledge that he and his men had fallen into a trap did not balk the sheriff; his rage rose to white heat and calling for an axe he advanced to the attack. The moment was freighted with peril. If the Yorkers attacked the house a withering fire would spring from the guns in the bushes and on the ridge and blood would flow in plenty in that heretofore peaceful vale of the northern forest.

CHAPTER IV

'SIAH BOLDERWOOD'S STRATAGEM

SHERIFF TEN EYCK was a man of determination and although he had before tested the mettle of the Grants men, he felt a burden of confidence now with this army behind him. The ridicule of the party in ambush stung his pride, and although warned that a considerable number of settlers were hidden in the wood, he was not disposed to temporize. But the men who had accompanied him on his nefarious mission were far differently impressed by the situation. They had followed the doughty sheriff in the hope of plunder, it is true; if the settlers of the Hampshire Grants were to be driven incontinently from their homes as Ten Eyck and the Governor declared, somebody must benefit by the circumstance, and the sheriff's men hoped to be of the benefited party. But this armed opposition was disheartening. When the chorus of groans rose from the surrounding

forest, his men as well as himself, knew that they had fallen into ambush, and this thought troubled the Yorkers greatly.

From the top of the ridge 'Siah Bolderwood had heard much of the controversy at the door of the Breckenridge house and as the really serious moment approached the old ranger was blessed with a sudden inspiration. He sprang forward and seizing Enoch Harding by the collar dragged him to his knees and whispered a command in his ear. "Quick, you young snipe you!" he exclaimed, as Enoch prepared to obey. "Run like the wind—and don't let 'em see you or you may get potted!"

Enoch was off in an instant, trailing his gun behind him and stooping low that the passage of his body through the brush might not be noted. He got the house between him and the sheriff's column and soon reached the side of the road where the other settlers in ambush were stationed. He found their leader and whispered Bolderwood's message to him. Instantly the man caught the idea and the word was passed down the straggling line. Enoch did not return but waited with

these men, who were nearer the enemy, to see the matter out.

The sheriff was on the verge of giving the command to break down the door of the besieged house when suddenly a wild yell broke out upon the ridge above and was taken up by the settlers in the brush by the roadside. It was the warwhoop—the yell which originally incited the red warriors to action and was supposed to strike terror to the hearts of their enemies. The shrill cry echoed through the wood with startling significance. At the same instant every man's cap was raised upon his gun barrel and thrust forward into view of the startled Yorkers, while the settlers themselves showed their heads, but nearer the ground. Only for a moment were they thus visible; then they dropped back into hiding again.

But the effect upon the sheriff's unwilling army was paralyzing. The Yorkers thought that twice as many men were hidden in the forest as were really there, for the hats on the gun barrels had seemed like heads, too. They thought every man in Bennington—and indeed, as far east as Brattleboro and Westmin-

ster—must have come to defend James Breckenridge's farm, and they clamored loudly to return to the Twenty-Mile Line and safety.

In vain the sheriff fumed and stormed, threatening all manner of punishment for his mutinous troops; the army was determined to a man to have no conflict with the settlers of the Disputed Ground. Like "the noble Duke of York" in the old catch-song familiar at that day, Sheriff Ten Eyck had marched his seven hundred or more men up to James Breckenridge's door only "to march them down again!" 'Siah Bolderwood's idea had taken all the desire for fight out of the Yorkers, and after some wrangling between the personal attendants of the sheriff and the volunteer army, the whole crew marched away, leaving the farm to the undisputed possession of its rightful owner.

When the Yorkers departed the little garrison of the house appeared and cheered lustily; but the men in the woods did not come out of hiding until the last of the enemy had disappeared, for they did not wish the invaders to know how badly they had been deceived

regarding their numbers. By and by Bolderwood and his men marched down from the ridge and 'Siah was congratulated upon his happy thought in bringing about the confusion of the Yorkers.

"You've a long head on those narrow shoulders of yours, neighbor," declared Ethan Allen, striking the old ranger heartily on the back. "That little wile finished them. And this is the boy I saw trailing through the bushes, is it?" and he seized Enoch and turned his face upward that he might the better view his features. "Why, holloa, my little man! I've seen you before surely?"

"It is poor Jonas Harding's eldest lad, neighbor Allen," Bolderwood said. "He's the head of the family now, and bein' sech, had to come along to fight the Yorkers."

"I remember your father," declared Allen, kindly. "A noble specimen of the Almighty's workmanship. I stopped a night with him once at his cabin—do you remember me?"

As though Nuck could have forgotten it! His youthful mind had made Ethan Allen a veritable hero ever since, placing him upon

a pedestal before which he worshipped. But he only nodded for bashfulness.

"You'll make a big man, too," said the giant. "And if you can shoot straight there'll be plenty of chance for you later on. This is only the beginning, 'Siah," he pursued, turning to Bolderwood and letting his huge hand drop from Enoch's head. "There will be court-doings, now—writs, and ejectments, and enough red seals to run the King's court itself. But while the Yorkers are red-sealing us, we'll blue-seal them—if they come over here, eh?" and he went off with a great shout of laughter at his own punning.

The men were minded to scatter but slowly. All were rejoiced that the battle had been a bloodless one; yet none believed the matter ended. The fiasco of the New York sheriff might act as a wet blanket for the time upon the movements of the authorities across the line; but the land speculators were too numerous and active to allow the people of the Grants to remain in peace. Parties of marauders might swoop down at any time upon the more unprotected settlers, drive them out of their homes, destroy their property, and possibly

do bodily injury to the helpless people. Methods must be devised to keep these Yorkers on their own side of the disputed line. Those settlers, such as the widow Harding, who were least able to protect themselves, must have the help of their neighbors. The present victory proved the benefit to be derived from concerted action. Now, in the flush of this triumph, the leaders went among the yeomanry who had gathered here and outlined a plan for permanent military organization. In all the colonies at that day, "training bands," or militia, had become popular, made so in part by the interest aroused by the wars with the French and Indians. Many of the men who joined these military companies did not look deeply into the affairs of the colonies, nor were they much interested in politics; but their leaders looked ahead—just as did Ethan Allen and his conferees in the Grants—and realized that an armed yeomanry might some time be called upon to face hirelings of the King.

"Even a lad like you can bear a rifle, and your mother will spare you from the farm for drill," Allen said, with his hand again on

Enoch's shoulder, before riding away. "I shall expect to see Jonas Harding's boy at Bennington when word is sent round for the first drill." And Enoch, his heart beating high with pride at this notice, promised to gain his mother's permission if possible.

Bolderwood had already gone, and Lot Breckenridge detained Enoch until after the dinner hour. Lot would have kept him all night, but the latter knew his mother would be anxious to see him safe home, and he started an hour or two before sunset, on the trail which Bolderwood and he had followed early in the morning. Being one of the last to leave James Breckenridge's house, he traveled the forest alone. But he had no feeling of fear. The trails and by-paths were as familiar to him as the streets of his home-town are to a boy of to-day. And the numberless sounds which reached his ears were distinguished and understood by the pioneer boy. The hoarse laugh of the jay as it winged its way home over the tree-tops, the chatter of the squirrel in the hollow oak, the sudden scurry of deer in the brake, the barking of a fox on the hillside, were all sounds

with which Enoch Harding was well acquainted.

As he crossed a heavily shadowed creek, a splash in the water attracted his particular attention and he crept to the brink in time to see a pair of sleek dark heads moving swiftly down the stream. Soon the heads stopped, bobbed about near a narrow part of the stream, and finally came out upon the bank, one on either side. The trees stood thick together here, and both animals attacked a straight, smooth trunk standing near the creek, their sharp teeth making the chips fly as they worked. They were a pair of beavers beginning a dam for the next winter. Enoch marked the spot well. About January he would come over with Lot, or with Robbie Baker, stop up the mouth of the beaver's tunnel, break in the dome of his house, and capture the family. Beaver pelts were a common article of barter in a country where real money was a curiosity.

But watching the beavers delayed Enoch and it was growing dark in the forest when he again turned his face homewards. He knew the path well enough—the runway he

traveled was so deep that he could scarce miss it and might have followed it with his eyes blindfolded,—but he quickened his pace, not desiring to be too late in reaching his mother's cabin. Unless some neighbor had passed and given them the news of the victory at James Breckenridge's they might be worried for fear there had actually been a battle. Deep in the forest upon the mountainside there sounded the human-like scream of a catamount, and the memory of his adventure of the morning was still very vivid in his mind. He began to fear his mother's censure for his delay, too, for Mistress Harding brought up her children to strict obedience and Enoch, man though he felt himself to be because of this day's work, knew he had no business to loiter until after dark in the forest.

He stumbled on now in some haste and was approaching the ford in the wide stream near which he had shot the doe, when a flicker of light off at one side of the trail attracted his attention. It was a newly kindled campfire and the pungent smoke of it reached his nostrils at the instant the flame was apparent to his eyes. He leaped behind a tree and peered

through the thickening darkness at the spot where the campfire was builded. His heart beat rapidly, for despite the supposed peacefulness of the times there was always the possibility of enemies lurking in the forest. And the settlers had grown wary since the controversy with the Yorkers became so serious.

Enoch was nearing the boundaries of his father's farm now and ever since Simon Halpen had endeavored to evict them and especially since Jonas Harding's death, the possibility of the Yorkers' return had been a nightmare to Enoch. Lying a moment almost breathless behind the tree, he began to recover his presence of mind and fortitude. First he freshened the priming of his gun and then, picking his way cautiously, approached the campfire. Like a shadow he flitted from tree to tree and from brush clump to stump, circling the camp, but ever drawing nearer. With the instinct of the born wood-ranger he took infinite pains in approaching the spot and from the moment he had observed the light he spent nearly an hour in circling about until he finally arrived at a point where he could view successfully the tiny clearing.

Now, at once, he descried a figure sitting before the blaze. The man had his back against a tree and that is why Enoch had found such difficulty at first in seeing him. He was nodding, half asleep, with his cap pulled down over his eyes, so that only the merest outline of his face was revealed. It was apparent that he had eaten his own supper, for there were the indications of the meal upon the ground; but it looked as though he expected some other person to join him. The wind began to moan in the tree-tops; far away the mournful scream of the catamount broke the silence again. The boy cast his gaze upward into the branches, feeling as though one of the terrible creatures, with which he had engaged in so desperate a struggle that very morning, was even then watching him from the foliage.

And he was indeed being watched, and by eyes well nigh as keen as those of the wildcat. While he stood behind the tree, all of half a gun-shot from the camp, a figure stepped silently out of the shadows and stood at his elbow before the startled lad realized that he was not alone. A vice-like hand

A Hand was Pressed over His Lips

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seized his arm so that he could not turn his rifle upon this unexpected enemy. Before he could cry out a second hand was pressed firmly over his parted lips. "No speak!" breathed a voice in Enoch Harding's ear. "If speak, white boy die!"

It was Crow Wing, the young Iroquois, and Enoch obeyed. He found himself forced rapidly away from the campfire and when they were out of ear-shot of the unconscious stranger, and not until then, did the grasp of the Indian relax. "What do you want with me?" Enoch demanded, in a whisper. The other did not reply. He only pushed the white boy on until they came to the ford of the creek where Enoch and 'Siah Bolderwood had crossed early in the day. There Crow Wing released him altogether and pointed sternly across the river. "Your house—that way!" he said. "Go!"

"Who is that man back yonder?" cried Enoch, angrily. "You can't make me do what you say——"

Crow Wing tapped the handle of the long knife at his belt suggestively. "White boy go—go now!" he commanded again, and in

spite of his being armed with a rifle while the Indian had no such weapon, Enoch felt convinced that it would be wiser for him to obey without parley. Although Crow Wing could not have been three years his senior, he was certainly the master on this occasion. With lagging step he descended the bank and began to ford the stream. He glanced back and saw the Indian, standing like a statue of bronze, on the bank above him. When he reached the middle of the stream, however, he felt the full ignominy of his retreat before a foe who was not armed equally with himself. What would Bolderwood say if he told him? what would his father have done?

He swung about quickly and raised the rifle to his shoulder. But the Indian lad had gone. Not an object moved upon the further shore of the creek and, after a minute or two of hesitation, the white boy stumbled on through the stream and reached the other bank. He was angry with himself for being afraid of Crow Wing, and he was also angry that he had not seen the face of the stranger at the campfire. It must have been somebody whom Crow Wing knew and did not wish the

white boy to see. Enoch Harding continued his homeward way, his mind greatly disturbed by the adventure and with a feeling of deep resentment against the Indian youth.

CHAPTER V

THE PIONEER HOME

Enoch arrived feeling not of half so much importance as he had on starting from the Breckenridge farm. His adventure with Crow Wing had mightily taken down his self-conceit. Like most of the settlers he had very little confidence in the Indian character; so, although Crow Wing had rendered the defenders of the Grants a signal service that very day, Enoch was not at all sure that the red youth was not helping the Yorkers, too.

But when he came out of the wood at the edge of the great corn-field which his father had cleared first of all, and saw the light of the candles shining through the doorway of the log house, he forgot his recent rage against Crow Wing and hurried on to greet those whom he loved. The children came running out to meet him and the light of the candles was shrouded as his mother's tall form appeared in the doorway. Bryce, who

was eleven years old, was almost as tall as Enoch, although he lacked his elder brother's breadth of shoulders and gravity of manner. Enoch was deliberate in everything he did; Bryce was of a more nervous temperament and was apt to act upon impulse. He was a fair-haired boy and was forever smiling. Now he reached Nuck first and fairly hugged him around the neck, exclaiming:

"We thought you were shot! However came you to be so long comin' back, Nuck? Mother's quite worritted 'bout you, she says."

Katie, the fly-away sister of ten, hurled herself next upon her elder brother and seized the heavy rifle from his hands. "Look out for it, Kate!" commanded Nuck. "It's been freshly primed." But Katie was not afraid of firearms. She shouldered the gun and marched bravely toward the house. Mary, demure and curly headed, and little Harry, remained nearer the door, and lifted their faces to be kissed in turn by Enoch when he arrived. Then the boy turned to his mother.

"Come in, my son," she said. "I have saved your supper for you. I could not send the children to bed before you came. They

were a-well nigh wild to see you and hear about the doings at farmer Breckenridge's. You are late."

This was all she said regarding his tardiness at the moment. She was a very pleasant featured woman of thirty-five, with kind eyes and a cheery, if grave, smile; but Enoch knew she could be stern enough if occasion required. Indeed, she was a far stricter disciplinarian than his father had been. They crowded into the house and Mrs. Harding went to the fire and hung the pot over the glowing coals to heat again the stewed venison which she had saved for Enoch's supper.

"Tell us about it, Enoch, my son," she said. "Did the Yorkers come as friend Bolderwood said they would—in such numbers?"

"In greater numbers," declared the boy, and he went on to recount the incidents of the morning when Sheriff Ten Eyck had demanded the surrender of the Breckenridge house and farm. The incident had appealed strongly to the boy and he drew a faithful picture of the scene when the army of Yorkers marched up to the farmhouse door and demanded admission.

"And Mr. Allen was there and spoke to me —he did!" declared Enoch. "He's a master big man—and so handsome. He asked me if I remembered his coming here once to see father, and he told me to be sure and go to Bennington when the train-band is mustered in. I can, can't I, mother?"

"And me, too!" cried Bryce. "I can carry Nuck's musket now't he shoots with father's gun. I can shoot, too—from a rest."

"Huh!" exclaimed his elder brother, "you can't carry the old musket even, and march."

"Yes I can!"

"No you can't!"

But the mother's voice recalled the boys to their better behavior. "I will talk with 'Siah Bolderwood about your joining the train-band, Enoch. And if you go to Bennington with Enoch, Bryce, who will defend our home? You must stay here and guard mother and the other children, my boy."

Bryce felt better at that suggestion and the argument between Enoch and himself was dropped. The widow soon sent all but Enoch to bed in the loft over the kitchen and living room of the cabin. There was a bedroom oc-

cupied by herself partitioned off from the living room, while Enoch slept on a "shake-down" near the door. This he had insisted upon doing ever since his father's death.

"You were very late in returning, my son," said the widow when the others had climbed the ladder to the loft.

"Yes, marm."

"You did not come right home?"

"No, marm. I stayed to eat with Lot Breckenridge. And then I wanted to hear the men talk."

"You should have started earlier for home, Enoch," she said, sternly.

"Well, I'd got here pretty near sunset if it hadn't been for somethin' that happened just the other side of the crick," Enoch declared, forgetting the fact that he had stopped to watch the beavers before ever he saw the campfire in the wood.

"What was it?" she asked.

"There's somebody over there—a tall man, but I couldn't see his face——"

"Where?"

"Beyond the crick; 'twarn't half a mile from where father was killed at the deer-lick.

I saw a light in the bushes. It was a campfire an' I couldn't go by without seein' what it was for. So I crept up on it an' bymeby I saw the man."

"You don't know who he was?" asked the widow, quickly.

"No, marm."

"Did he have a dark face and was his nose hooked?"

"I couldn't see his face. He was sittin' down all the time. His face was shaded with his cap. He sat with his back up against a tree. I was a long while gittin' near enough to see him, an' then ——"

"Well, what happened, my son?"

"Then that Crow Wing—you know him; the Injin boy that useter live down the crick with his folks—Crow Wing come out of the forest an' grabbed me an' told me not to holler or he'd kill me. I wasn't 'zactly 'fraid of him," added Enoch, thinking some explanation necessary, "but I saw if I fought him it would bring the man at the fire to help, and I couldn't fight two of 'em, anyway. The pesky Injin made me walk to the crick with him an' then he told me to go home and

not come back. I wish 'Siah Bolderwood was here. We'd fix 'em!"

"The Indian threatened you!" cried the widow. "Have you done anything to anger him, Enoch? I know your father was very bitter toward them all; but I hoped ——"

"I never done a thing to him!" declared the boy. "I don't play with him much, though Lot does; but I let him alone. I useter make fun of him b'fore—b'fore 'Siah told me more about his folks. Crow Wing's father is a good friend to the whites. He fought with our folks ag'in the French Injins."

"But who could the man have been?" asked the widow, gravely. "The children saw a man lurking about the corn-field at the lower end to-day. And when I was milking, Mary came and told me that he was then across the river at the ox-bow, looking over at the house. If it should be Simon Halpen! He will not give up his hope of getting our rich pastures, I am afraid. We must watch carefully, Enoch."

"I'll shoot him if he comes again!" declared the boy, belligerently. Then he closed

and barred the door and rapidly prepared for bed. His mother retired to her own room, but long after Enoch was soundly sleeping on his couch, the good woman was upon her knees beside her bed. Although she was proud to see Enoch so sturdy and helpful, she feared this controversy with the Yorkers would do him much harm; and it was for him, as well as for the safety of them all in troublous times, that she prayed to the God in whom she so implicitly trusted.

The next day 'Siah Bolderwood came striding up to the cabin with the carcass of the doe Enoch had shot across his shoulders, and found the widow at her loom, just within the door. She welcomed the lanky ranger warmly, for he had not only been her husband's closest friend but had been of great assistance to her children and herself since Jonas' death. "The children will be glad to see you, 'Siah," she said. "I will call them up early and get supper for us all. I will have raised biscuit, too—it is not often you get anything but Johnny-cake, I warrant. The boys are working to clear the new lot to-day."

"Aye, I saw them as I came along," said Bolderwood, laughing. "There was Mistress Kate on top of a tall stump, her black hair flying in the wind, and Nuck's old musket in her hands. She said she was on guard, and she hailed me before I got out of the wood. Her eyes are sharp."

"She should have been a boy," sighed the widow. "Indeed, this wilderness is no place for girls at all."

"Bless their dear little souls!" exclaimed Bolderwood, with feeling. "What'd we do without Kate an' Mary? They keep the boys sweet, mistress! And Kate's as good as a boy any day when it comes to looking out for herself; while as I came through the stumpage Mary was working with the best of 'em to pull roots and fire-weed."

"The boys want a stump-burning as soon as possible. Jonas got the new lot near cleared. There's only the rubbish to burn."

"Good idea. Nuck and Bryce are doing well. . . . But what was the sentinel for?"

"It isn't all play," said the widow, stopping her work and speaking seriously.

"Yesterday the children saw a strange man hanging about the creek yonder. And last night on his way back from Master Breckenridge's, Enoch saw a campfire in the forest and a man sitting by it. An Indian youth whom perhaps you have seen here—Crow Wing, he is called—was with the man. Crow Wing drove Enoch off before he could find out who the white man was."

"Crow Wing, eh?" repeated 'Siah, shaking his head thoughtfully. "I know the red scamp. If he was treated right by the settlers, though, he'd be decent enough. But he got angry at Breckenridge's yesterday, they tell me. Somebody spoke roughly to him. You can ruffle the feathers of them birds mighty easy."

This was all the comment the ranger made upon the story; but later he wandered down to the new lot which the Hardings were clearing, and instead of lending a hand inquired particularly of Enoch where he had seen the campfire the night before. Learning the direction he plunged into the wood without further ado and went to the ford, crossing it with caution and going at once to the vicinity

of the fire which Enoch had observed. But the ashes had been carefully covered and little trace of the occupation of the spot left. At one point, however, 'Siah found where two persons—a white man and a red one—had embarked in a canoe which had been hidden under the bank of the creek. Evidently Crow Wing had expected the place would be searched and had done all in his power to mystify the curious.

When 'Siah returned Mistress Harding had called up the children and supper—a holiday meal—was almost ready. A lamb had been killed the day before and was stuffed and baked in the Dutch oven. There were light white-flour biscuits, Enoch had ridden to Bennington with the wheat slung across his saddle to have it ground, and there was sweet butter and refined maple sap which every family in the Grants boiled down in the spring for its own use, although as yet there was little market for it. It was a jolly meal, for when 'Siah came the children were sure of something a bit extra, both to eat and to do. He taught the girls how to make doll babies with cornsilk hair, and begged powder and

shot of their mother for Bryce and Enoch to use in shooting at a mark. Under his instructions Enoch had become a fairly good marksman, while Bryce, by resting his gun in the fork of a sapling set upright in the ground, did almost as well as his elder brother.

After supper Bolderwood talked with the widow while he smoked his pipe. "We need boys like Enoch, Mistress Harding," he said. "While he's young I don't dispute, he's big for his age and can handle that rifle pretty well. You must let him go up to Bennington next week and drill with the other young fellows. There will be no need of his going on any raids with the older men. We shall keep the boys out of it, and most of the beech-sealin' will be done by the men who hain't got no fam'blies here and are free in their movements. But the drill will be good for him and the time may come when all this drillin' will pay."

"You really look for serious trouble with the Yorkers, Master Bolderwood?" she asked.

"I reckon I do. With them or—or others. Things is purty tick'lish—you know that,

widder. The King ain't treatin' us right, an' his ministers and advisers don't care anything about these colonies, 'ceptin' if we don't make 'em rich. Then they trouble us. And the governors are mostly all alike. I don't think a bit better of Benning Wentworth than I do of these 'ere New York governors. They don't re'lly care nothin' for us poor folk."

So the widow agreed to allow Enoch to go to Bennington ; and when the day came for the gathering of those youths and men who could be spared from the farms, to meet there, he mounted the old claybank mare, his shoes and stockings slung before him over the saddle bow that his great toes might be the easier used as spurs, and with a bag of corn behind him to be left for grinding at the mill, trotted along the trail to the settlement. Before he had gone far on the road he saw other men and boys bound in the same direction. Remember Baker passed him, with Robbie, his boy, perched behind on the saddle, and clinging like a leech to his father's coat-tails as the horse galloped over the rough road. Enoch saw Robbie later, however, and invited him to the stump burning which was to take place

the following week. He saw Lot Breckenridge, too, at the Green Mountain Inn, and invited him to come, and sent word to other boys and girls in the Breckenridge neighborhood.

Lot's mother would not let him carry a gun, but he had come to look on and see the "greenhorns" take their first lesson in the manual of arms. Stephen Fay, mine host of the "Catamount" Inn as the hostlery had come to be called—a large, jocund individual who was a Grants man to the core and earnest in the cause of the Green Mountain Boys—made all welcome and the old house was crowded from daylight till dark. In the gallery which ran along the face of the inn, even with the second story windows, the ladies of the town sat and viewed the maneuvres of the newly formed train-band. Before the door stood the twenty-five foot post that held the sign and was likewise capped by a stuffed catamount, in a very lifelike pose, its grinning teeth and extended claws turned toward the New York border in defiance of "Yorker rule."

The leaders of the party which had suggested

these drills—all staunch Whigs and active in their defiance of the Yorkers,—met together in the inn that day, too, and laid plans for a campaign against certain settlers from New York who had come into the Grants and taken up farms without having paid the New Hampshire authorities for the same. In not all cases had these New York settlers driven off people who had bought the land of New Hampshire or her agents; but if it was really the property of that colony the Yorkers had no right upon the eastern side of the Twenty-Mile Line, or on that side of the lake, at all. As far north as the opposite shore from Fort Ticonderoga, that key to the Canadian route which had been wrested from the French but a few years before, Yorkers had settled; and the Green Mountain Boys determined that these people must leave the Disputed Ground or suffer for their temerity.

After the failure of Ten Eyck to capture the Breckenridge farm, New York began a system of flattery and underhanded methods against the Grants men which was particularly effective. The Yorkers chose certain more or less influential individuals and offered them

local offices, gifts of money, and even promised royal titles to some, if they would range themselves against the Green Mountain Boys. In some cases these offers were accepted; in this way John Munro had become a justice of the peace, and Benjamin Hough followed his example. Some foolish folk went so far as to accept commissions as New York officers, but hoped to hide the fact from their neighbors until a fitting season—when the Grants were not afflicted with the presence of the Green Mountain Boys. But in almost every case such cowardly sycophants were discovered and either made ridiculous before their neighbors by being tried and hoisted in a chair before the Catamount Inn, or were sealed with the twigs of the wilderness—and the Green Mountain Boys wielded the beech wands with no light hand.

Almost every week the military drills were held in Bennington and Enoch attended. But before the second one the "stump burning" came off at the Harding place and that was an occasion worthy of being chronicled.

CHAPTER VI

THE STUMP BURNING

Enoch and Lot Breckenridge, with Robbie Baker, had completed all the plans for the stump burning that first training day at Bennington. Lot, who lived so far from the Harding cabin, agreed to come over the night before if his mother would let him, and Robbie was to remain with Enoch the night after. The stumps and rubbish would be pretty well piled up and fired by afternoon, and then the boys could run races, and play games, and perhaps shoot at a mark, until supper-time. Mrs. Harding had already promised if the boys worked well to make a nice supper for them.

"An' we'll have the girls," said Lot.

"Oh, what good'll they be at a stump burnin'?" demanded young Baker, ungallantly.

"Lots o' good. They allus want good times, too," said Lot, standing up for his sis-

ters manfully. "You have no sisters, an' that's why you don't want 'em."

"They'll be in the way. Their frocks'll git torn if they help us, an' they'll git afire—or—or somethin'!"

"Nuck's sisters will be there. They'll want other girls," said the wise Lot. "An' b'sides, Mis' Harding'll be lots better to us if the girls is there. She allus is—my marm is. Mothers like girls, but boys is only a nuisance, they says." Lot had drawn these conclusions from the remarks of his own mother, who was troubled by many children and lacked that "faculty," as New England folk used to term it, for bringing them up cheerfully.

"I guess we'll get a better supper if the girls are there," admitted Nuck, quietly.

"But what'll they do?" demanded Robbie, the embryo woman-hater.

"I'll get mother ter be layin' out a quilt, or something, an' the girls can help about that."

"Zuckers!" cried Lot. "We'll have the finest time ever was. I'll be sure an' tell ev'rybody down my way. An' we'll all bring powder an' shot; it won't matter so much about guns, for them that don't have 'em can

borry of them that has, when it comes to shootin'."

"And I'll get Master Bolderwood to come an' be empire," declared Nuck, no farther out in his pronunciation of the word than some boys are nowadays.

So the girls were allowed to come, and an hour or two after sun-up on the day in question the Harding place was fairly overrun with young folk of both sexes. Those boys who came from a goodly distance brought their sisters with them; but the greater number of the girls, living within a radius of a few miles of the Harding cabin, did not come until after dinner, having to remain at home to help their own mothers before attending the merrymaking.

And what a merrymaking it was! Truly, all work and no play makes Jack a dull boy, and in a country and at a time when all young people had to work almost as hard as their parents, the pioneer fathers and mothers encouraged the young folk to mix pleasure well with their tasks. Indeed, it was a system followed by the older folks as well on many occasions. Corn-shuckings, apple-parings, log-roll-

ings, sugaring-off—all these tasks even down to "hog-killings"—were made the excuse for social gatherings. The idea of helping one another in the heavier tasks of their existence on the frontier was likewise combined in this. Many hands make light work, and a cabin which would have kept one family busy for a fortnight was often put up and the roof of drawn shingles laid in a day's time, by the neighbors of the proprietor of the new structure all taking hold of the work.

So in this stump burning, which usually followed upon the clearing of a new piece of ground. More than a year before Jonas Harding had begun on this lot, with the intention of clearing it entirely and in the end having a handsome piece of grass-land along the edge of the creek. In the fall a fire had run over the piece and now the stumps were mostly dead, although the fire-weed was waist high. Some of the stumps had already been pulled up, but many were too large for the muscles of the young Hardings and it was the help of their companions to pull these stumps to which they looked forward to-day.

With patience remarkable in such young-

sters, Enoch and Bryce had dug around the base of all the big stumps, had cut off the long side roots, and when possible had dug beneath and cut the tap-root of the tree, thus making the final extraction of the big stumps all the easier of accomplishment. They were piled up and set burning, and round these bonfires the boys danced like wild Indians and kept the fires fed up to noon-time. Between the sunshine and the flames the youngsters were all pretty well scorched by then.

But before the horn was blown for dinner there were two arrivals on the scene, one joyfully welcomed by all and the other rather unexpected but not less welcome to many of the boys. 'Siah Bolderwood entered the clearing from a forest-path at almost the same instant that a lithe young figure appeared from the direction of the creek. Enoch ran to his old friend and hugged him in his delight. "Ain't I glad you've come, 'Siah! We got most of the work done; we're goin' to get lots of nice ashes, too. We're goin' ter have races and a wrastling match after dinner."

"Hullo! who's this?" said 'Siah, pointing across the clearing.

Enoch turned to see the Indian youth, Crow Wing, striding up from the water's edge. A good half of the boys had turned with shouts of welcome to meet him, for he was popular with them. Ordinarily Crow Wing was a very social fellow and taught the white boys to make arrows, string their bows, build canoes, and set ingenious snares. "I don't want him here!" declared Enoch to the ranger.

"Tut, tut, what do you care? There's no need in your making an enemy of that fellow, Nuck. Let him be."

"But think how he used me the other night when I was trying to find out about that man in the woods! I don't like him."

"Well, we can't like everybody in this world," said Bolderwood, philosophically. "We gotter take folks as we find 'em—that's my motter. You let the Injin stay. He's come to help and to have the fun arterward; you sent 'round the invitation pretty promisc'us like, an' I calkerlate you can't ask him to leave 'thout makin' yerself mighty onpop'lar. Take my advice an' let him stay."

So, much against his will, Enoch did so.

But he and the Indian lad avoided each other and nothing Crow Wing did could gain any word of approbation from his young host. However, Crow Wing and Bolderwood were in time to help do the heaviest of the work and soon the last stump was out of the soil and piled upon a flaming pyre. The several bonfires could not spread to the underbrush, so the boys were able to leave them for the time and rush away to the creek for a swim before dinner. After they had washed off the smut and smoke, they engaged in races and in diving matches until the horn blew to recall them to the house. In all aquatic sports Lot Breckenridge was the master, for even Crow Wing could not perform the tricks that he could, nor could the Indian swim so far nor so fast.

Mistress Harding had arranged two long tables outside the cabin, making them of planks and "horses," and spreading her unbleached sheets over them for table-cloths. The girls had picked flowers and decorated the tables very prettily. There were all kinds and conditions of dishes for use—earthen, tin, pewter, and even wooden bowls carved out of

"whorls." And as for spoons and knives and forks—well, they were very scarce indeed. But every boy carried a pocket or hunting knife, and some had even been thoughtful enough to bring a knife and fork from home. Nevertheless, despite the lack of articles which we now consider the commonest of possessions, the table manners of these pioneer boys and girls were very good. They were on their best behavior while visiting, and the presence of the girls had a good influence on the boys.

The dinner was not to be the great meal of the day, for the boys did not wish to eat too much before the activities of the afternoon. Mistress Harding and the big girls had promised several dainties for supper, among which was a berry pudding, the girls having picked the berries that morning while their brothers were clearing the stumpage. The day before Enoch had shot a quantity of wood-pigeons, too, and there was to be a huge pigeon pie baked in the Dutch oven. There could be no stuffed lamb on this occasion, however; sheep were too hard to raise and the pioneers tasted mutton but seldom, for the fleece was too

valuable for them to kill the animal which supplied it. But Bolderwood had brought in a fawn which he had hung until it was of the right flavor, and this was dressed and roasted like a young kid. When the boys heard of these good things it almost took their appetites away at the dinner table, for they did not wish to eat more than was absolutely necessary before the holiday supper.

They were quickly back in the new lot, raked the fires together, flung the last root and chip on the blaze, and then repaired to the level meadow by the riverside where the games were to take place. The meadow had been mown some days before (they always got two mowings a season off the rich creek bottoms) and the new grass had sprung up just enough to be soft and velvety to the feet. Off came the shoes and stockings of those boys who had been trammeled by such articles of attire—all except Crow Wing. He still wore his moccasins. The foot-races were to come first, and Bolderwood and Lot carefully measured the distance along the bank where the land was almost level, setting stakes at either end of the course. It was not

a long run and everybody lined up for the first trial and they charged down upon the further stake like a gang of wild colts. Crow Wing, Enoch, Lot, and Robbie Baker were easily ahead of the others, and they with two more who had shown promise, were lined up for a second trial. This was really to be the contest and the six prepared to do their best, while the onlookers, girls and all, cheered their favorites.

Bolderwood lined up the half dozen youths very carefully. The white boys had thrown aside their outer shirts so as to give the freer play to their muscles. Crow Wing wore but one upper garment anyway, and he made no change in his dress excepting to pull his belt a little tighter. When the ranger had them placed to his satisfaction and all had signified that they were ready, he started them off with a shout. This time the race was to be down to the further post and back again, each contestant being obliged to go around the post before turning back, and a watch was set there that no one should make a mistake in this. There was a swift patter of feet on the sod for a minute and then Crow Wing and

Enoch forged ahead. They rounded the stake almost together and came down the home stretch far in the lead of the other contestants. First the white boy was ahead, then the Indian, and finally when the race ended they were elbow to elbow and one not an inch in advance of the other!

The spectators cheered lustily, but the race must be run over by these two to learn who really was the winner. Bolderwood allowed them a few minutes between the trials; but the Indian did not seem to need the rest. He still breathed easily, while Enoch lay panting on the sod. The white boy finally went to the line with the assurance in his own heart that he should be beaten; but he was too plucky to give up the fight without trying again. This race was even more hardly contested than the others had been and although it was apparent that Crow Wing ran more easily than did Enoch, the latter worked so hard that it was doubtful for a time whether the Indian could win after all. Enoch ran until his knees almost gave under him and his breath came in great gasps from his chest. Had he been a less healthy

and active boy he might have permanently injured himself from the overstrain of the contest. As it was, Crow Wing managed to cross the line first and was pronounced champion.

Enoch had just strength enough to shake the winner's hand before he fell upon the grass, and there he lay exhausted while the other boys held a "potato race" and jumped hurdles. It provoked young Harding terribly to see how seemingly fresh Crow Wing still was, while he was nearly dead with fatigue. He began to take interest in the proceedings, however, when his brother Bryce won the potato race after a close contest with Robbie Baker; and rejoiced when Lot beat Crow Wing in jumping. "That red rascal ain't goin' to beat everybody here," thought Enoch, and he got up and ceased sulking.

The wrestling match was the last of the day's sports. Bolderwood paired the boys off to the best of his judgment for the first bout; but the winners drew lots to see who they should wrestle with the second time. Lot had Crow Wing for an antagonist on this occasion, and Enoch was paired with Smith

Hubbard, a hulking great fellow, bigger and taller than any other boy in the crowd. But he was also slower and more awkward than most, having won his first throw by sheer weight rather than skill. Enoch threw him fairly at the second trial, while the Indian lad quite as easily worsted young Breckenridge.

The winners drew again and Enoch had quite a tug with another contestant; but Crow Wing put his antagonist on the ground three times in succession, and with apparent ease. It was plain that the match was to end with another contest between the Indian and Enoch Harding and the interest waxed high. Enoch was determined to keep his head and control his temper this time. Crow Wing was nominally his guest and he played fair; there was no reason why he should not bear off all the honors if he could do so. But the white boy determined to give the red the fight of his life for the honor of champion wrestler.

Enoch had long been considered the best wrestler among the boys of his age. Although Lot was older and taller than him, he threw the bigger boy easily. Crow Wing had quite as easily worsted young Breckenridge; but

when the Indian and Enoch finally faced each other in the ring the latter gritted his teeth and determined to put forth every ounce of strength, and use every legitimate trick he knew, to beat his antagonist.

He had recovered his wind now and felt fresh and strong. He measured the lithe form of Crow Wing before the word was given and saw that, although the Indian was doubtless stronger than he in the legs and through the loins, where much of the strain comes in a wrestling match, his own arms and shoulders were much better. Crow Wing ran a great deal, or walked. He was on the trail almost continually, and thus his leg muscles were splendidly developed. Whereas the white boy swung an axe or wielded a hoe almost every day and the upper part of his body was in excellent condition. He saw that if he could seize Crow Wing quickly and with a first effort overpower him, the victory would be his.

So he went into the wrestling match with the intention of getting a "down" at once, and the first round was over almost before Crow Wing knew what Enoch was about. "A fair fall! a fair fall!" cried the boys, and

danced about the pair as it was seen that both Crow Wing's hips and his shoulders were squarely on the turf. The Indian rose slowly, evidently much surprised by the white boy's tactics. If he was angry he did not show it. His face was as passive as ever.

"Quick work that," said Bolderwood. "You'll have to wake up, Crow Wing, if you want to get the best of Nuck."

"Hurrah for Nuck!" shouted the boys.

But the second trial was another matter. Crow Wing approached warily. He feinted several times and then leaped away when Enoch tried to seize him as he had before. He had felt the power of the white boy's muscles, and he did not propose to allow a second quick stroke. Enoch followed him around the ring and finally clutched him, but at arms' length. It was not a good hold; he knew it on the instant. But he had as good a chance as Crow Wing and there they were, swaying to and fro, and panting for several minutes, before either obtained the advantage.

Finally the Indian lad forced Enoch over his leg and slowly, yet determinedly, pushed him backward to the ground. When they

fell Crow Wing was on top, but it was several moments ere he managed to force Enoch's shoulders and hips to the earth together. The second round was declared won by Crow Wing and the boys took a rest before the third and final one. Enoch was glad to see that his antagonist suffered as much as he did this time, laboring for breath and with his face and arms covered with perspiration. When Bolderwood called them for the third round the Indian flung off his hunting shirt, thus showing that he considered the white boy a worthy antagonist indeed.

Enoch was more confident than before. He saw that he could not repeat his first quick throw; but he would not be deceived again into getting any uncertain hold. Crow Wing continued his former tactics, but Enoch simply followed him about, feinting as well as the Indian, and at last, when Crow Wing ran in, thinking he had a chance for an under hold, he caught him like a young bear and hugged him to his chest until the breath was fairly forced from the other's lungs. Although taller than the white boy the Indian was not so heavy and this display of muscle startled him.

With one arm caught between his own body and Enoch's he could do little to help himself and Enoch squeezed hard before he let him go. Then, with a quick toss, stooping as he made it, Enoch flung him, long legs and all, over his shoulder, and before Crow Wing could rise he was upon him and held him down. The Indian was so breathless that it was a small matter for Enoch to get the "four points" necessary to win the fall and he rose at last triumphant.

The boys and girls cheered him and Bolderwood said he was a good wrestler, and then Crow Wing, who had slipped into his shirt again, came to him and said, with a still impassive face: "Umph! white boy big wrestler —beat Crow Wing fair!" He held out his hand gravely and, after shaking Enoch's, stalked away while the others were busy, his absence being unnoticed until it came time to go up to the house for supper. "Guess he didn't like being licked," said Robbie Baker to Enoch. "You better look out for him, Nuck. My pa says them Injins is as treacherous as wolves."

But somehow Enoch felt that Crow Wing

was a better friend to him than he had been before. Something in the Indian's handshake seemed to have told him this. The supper was quite as good as the boys had expected. After the meal they shot at a target under 'Siah Bolderwood's direction and Robbie Baker, son of the greatest shot in the settlement, as was expected, bore off the honors. The company went home through the forest trails by moonlight and thus ended a long and happy day, in which much that was useful had been accomplished as well as a "good time" enjoyed.

As Enoch stood at the door of the cabin and watched the red glow from the fires in the newly cleared lot, he went over in his mind the incidents of the day. Such holidays were not plentiful in his life. It was mostly work and little play, and he would remember this occasion for many months. He did not suspect how many months would elapse, and how many momentous happenings would occur, before he saw all his young friends together once again.

CHAPTER VII

A NIGHT ATTACK

Not often did the Harding children enjoy such a day as that of the stump-burning. Life was very real indeed to pioneer folks, although the fact that every family in the community had to work hard left no loophole for complaint on any side. There were no very poor people then, and there were no immensely rich. It is only by comparison that human beings become discontented with their lot.

The widow's children had to work little harder than their neighbors. Their mother labored with them in the fields, as well as paying full attention to her household duties. She could swing an axe with most men in the township, and was no mean shot with the rifle. She led the corn hoeing and taught the older boys to do those things which were needful about the farm. The crops during this summer prospered well, and after clear-

ing up and barreling the ashes made during the stump-burning, Enoch and Bryce ploughed and harrowed the new piece along the creek's edge. They sowed it to winter grain and hung "scare-crows" all about the field to keep the wild birds from pulling up the tender shoots when they appeared above the mold.

Besides leading her children in the work of the farm, Mistress Harding paid more attention to their education than most parents of the settlement could. There was a school in Bennington during the winter months; but it was too far away for any of the Hardings to attend. But the widow had been a school-teacher before her marriage and she had brought some books with her from her old home. So part of almost every day she taught her children. The girls and little Harry, who was just learning his letters and "a-b, abs," studied during the daytime; but the older boys did their lessons by the light of the candle dips, or lying on the hearth before the dancing fire. Both summer and winter these studies were kept up and therefore Enoch and his brothers and sisters were

rather farther advanced in learning than the other children of the scattered community.

To this study Enoch took rather kindly; but to Bryce, who possessed more of his father's roving disposition, the school hour was distasteful. Bryce, too, complained more than a little because he was not allowed to go to Bennington on training days. He was growing rapidly and was well nigh as big as his brother, and he felt that he should be counted a member of the military company.

This drilling in the manual of arms had become a very serious matter to the Grants people. The Green Mountain Boys, which nickname had before the end of the summer become fixed upon the bands, were divided into four companies of which Seth Warner, 'Member Baker, Robert Cochran and Gideon Warner were the captains. Ethan Allen was elected colonel commanding by acclamation and plans were made to watch over many of the outlying districts liable to be troubled most frequently by the Yorkers. With all his impulsiveness, Allen was long-headed and something of a strategist; yet he leaned to some extent upon Captain Warner's good

sense. Warner was a man of much finer mould than the chief of the Green Mountain Boys, was well educated and had a personal following of his own in the Grants, second only to Allen's. But there was never any jealousy between them. Allen's was a nature too frank and generous to harbor such a despicable feeling, while Warner was too deeply interested in the cause to do so.

Nuck Harding was a proud boy indeed, for he was nigh the youngest among those who drilled. Such raiding as was done by the Green Mountain Boys that year was the work of small parties under Allen, Warner, or Cochran, and no general engagement occurred between the Grants settlers and the New York authorities, so Nuck saw no real service. At home, however, he and Bryce frequently talked over what they would do if Simon Halpen should visit them. That he had been scouting about the farm on the day of Sheriff Ten Eyck's fiasco at James Breckenridge's place, the older boy was sure. He was certain that the man he had seen beside the campfire in the wood, and whom Crow Wing seemed to befriend, was the Yorker who, twice before,

had tried to drive the Hardings from their home. But neither the man nor the Indian youth appeared in the neighborhood as the summer waned and the autumn harvests approached.

Nevertheless, after harvest, when the farm work was well cleared up, the boys put into practice a plan which, after much thought they had evolved. Many a frontier home of that, and an earlier day, had connected with it an underground passage, or room which, although usually devoted to the simple storage of potatoes and roots, could in time of need be used as a refuge for the family. Of an Indian attack there was little danger ; but they did not know to what length the Yorkers might go when once they did appear. Nuck believed Simon Halpen to be a man without compassion or mercy, and that the house might be attacked and burned over their heads.

So, while still the frost held off, they constructed beneath the fireplace a deep stone-walled apartment nearly eight feet square—large enough to hold the entire family if need should come. When finished the entrance

was gained by raising a large flat stone which was a part of the hearth. But the winter came without any alarm to the Hardings, and drew its slow length across the green hills and valleys like some albino monster of prehistoric times. The firs were snow-crowned and the white mantle lay deep in the hollows. Bryce and Enoch added generously to the family larder by the fruit of their hunting-trips, for there was plenty of time for such sport now. They had learned to weave snowshoes in Indian fashion, too, and Bolderwood taught Enoch to tan and "work" the deer hides so well that their mother was able to use the pliable leather for moccasins for the family. "Boughten" shoes they had; but they were kept for best, for the money to purchase them with came hard indeed to the widow.

Not until the sap began to flow from the maples was winter counted broken. Robbie Baker rode over about the middle of March and begged so hard that Mrs. Harding allowed Enoch to return with him to help at the Baker's "sugaring." There were plenty of fine maples near the Baker house and Nuck was promised a share of the refined sugar.

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There was no need of a hut at the sugar orchard, for they slept at Baker's house, and only a shelter was built over the great kettle in which the sap was boiled. Captain Baker made the incisions in the generous trees, and fitted the troughs; but Robbie and Nuck collected the sap and brought it, bucket by bucket, to the fire which Mrs. Baker tended. It was hard work but there was some fun connected with it, too, and Nuck enjoyed his week's visit—or would have done so had it not been for the incident with which the outing closed.

Through the winter the people of the Grants had lived almost entirely at peace with their troublesome neighbors over the border. But there were certain active spirits among the Yorkers who were waiting only for the coming of spring to continue their persecutions. Because of the raids by the leaders of the Green Mountain Boys, there were warrants out for several, and Captain Baker was one of these who was wanted by the Albany authorities. The infamous John Munro who had accepted the office of Justice of the Peace from the New York party, gathered ten or twelve choice

spirits on the night of March 22d, and feeling the security of numbers approached the home of the Grants' remarkable marksman, his mind fixed firmly upon the reward that had been offered for the apprehension of "the outlaw, Baker."

The Green Mountain Boy was not a man to be attacked without due consideration, and the Yorkers came to the house in the dead of night, breaking in without warning, and capturing Captain Baker in his bed. Even thus handicapped Baker fought with desperation and, overpowered by numbers and cruelly wounded, only gave over the struggle when he saw that the Yorkers were beating his wife and son as well.

"I surrender to ye, ye dogs!" he cried. "But let the woman and child alone," and at that they ceased to belabor Mrs. Baker and Robbie and set about removing the captive as expeditiously as possible. Robbie had been asleep in the loft with his guest when the attack was made and had run down the ladder to get at the guns; but this last was impossible. Enoch's rifle was likewise down-stairs and he was unable to help his friends; but instead of

showing himself to the enemy he lifted a corner of the bark roof and crept outside. It was dark, and although there was a watch kept without the house, he was not observed and managed to reach the ground by climbing down the corner logs.

By this time Captain Baker was a prisoner. They allowed him to partly dress and then securing him with thongs, brought him forth and threw him into a sledge which was in waiting. Their haste was obvious. Even in the night, and at this distance from any succor, the cowardly justice and his friends feared that members of the Green Mountain company would be aroused, and they had no wish to face Baker's comrades. Their idea was to get him across the Hudson and to Albany as swiftly as possible.

But Enoch, though unable to render his friends any assistance in the fight, had not been idle. Keeping the house between him and the Yorkers at the door, he reached the stable. Mrs. Baker's voice rose above the general din, begging the Yorkers to spare her husband—to at least allow her to bind up the wound in his head before they took him away.

But they merely laughed at her request. It made Enoch grit his teeth in rage, and pulling open the door of the stable he quickly entered and flung the captain's saddle upon the horse. Buckling the girth tightly he backed the steed out of the hovel and was astride it before the enemy observed him.

With a smart slap on the creature's flank Nuck sent the horse tearing down the road to Bennington and was almost out of rifle shot before the Yorkers realized his escape and the meaning of it. Several shots followed him, so reckless were the justice's companions, but there was no pursuit. Instead, the villains tumbled into the sledge and upon the backs of their own steeds, and amid the cries of the woman and Robbie, took the way to the Twenty-Mile Line and Albany. The prisoner's wife and son scarcely realized what Nuck's escape meant; it looked as though the guest had fled when peril threatened the helpless family. But Nuck very well knew what he was about.

It was still several hours before dawn, but the moon brilliantly illumined the forest road and as the way was fairly well beaten, Nuck

set the horse at his fastest pace. He knew that he could find men at Bennington—particularly at the Green Mountain Inn—who would consider no hardship too great to assist the captured settler. Many of Remember Baker's own company of Green Mountain Boys would be in town and Stephen Fay, the host, would be able to tell him where to find these men quickly. It was a long ride to the Hudson and the hope of overtaking the Yorkers and their prisoner spurred the boy on.

On and on flew the horse and rider until at last the scattered houses of the hamlet came into view. The settlement lay lifeless under the cold winter sky; not a spiral of smoke rose from the broad-topped chimneys, for the fires in every house were banked during the night, and it was too early for the spryest kitchen-maid to be astir. The horse thundered up to the door of the Catamount Inn and Nuck's wild halloa brought a night-capped head to the window instantly—that of the innkeeper.

"What might be the news, neighbor?" he demanded.

"Captain Baker has been carried off by the

Yorkers!" shouted Nuck, and his words were heard by other night-capped heads at other windows about the inn. "'Squire Munro and some others came and got him out of bed. They've driven off toward the Line."

"'Member Baker's captured!" The word was taken up by a dozen voices and the settlers dressed hurriedly and ran forth from their houses. Meanwhile Master Fay had aroused certain men who happened to be in his hostelry, as well as the stablemen in the yard. There was a great bustle about the inn. "Boy!" cried the innkeeper to Nuck, who still bestrode Captain Baker's horse, "do you go and call Isaac Clark and Joe Safford. They'll have their horses handy—and good horses, too, I'll be bound. Tell them to come here with saddle and rifle."

These two men lived at the other end of the village. Nuck routed them out and in fifteen minutes was back with them at the inn. By that time quite a crowd had collected and ten men beside Nuck were found to be mounted and ready to set forth after the Yorkers. Each was a tried Green Mountain Boy and eager to take satisfaction for the at-

tack upon their leader. Ten men were considered ample to attack the Yorkers, and with a promise to the bystanders to recapture 'Member Baker, even though they followed him to Albany, the cavalcade galloped away from the Green Mountain Inn, Enoch riding in their train.

CHAPTER VIII

THE TRAITOR'S WAY

Remember Baker lived at Arlington, and the distance from that new settlement, it could hardly be called a village, to Bennington was about two and a half miles. Enoch Harding might have given the alarm to the neighbors of the captured man, but he knew that they would not be able to pursue the Yorkers, for good horse flesh was scarce outside of Bennington. And Robbie would doubtless rouse them, anyway, as soon as he was recovered from his fright. As he saw it, Enoch believed his duty to point to the Catamount Inn, and we have seen how quickly a company was formed there for the chase of the Yorkers and their prisoner.

Enoch had ridden Baker's horse hard into town and now he followed behind the ten rescuers, urging the animal to still greater efforts. The hard-packed snow rang merrily under the hoofs of the steeds. Fortunately

the boy's mount had been well "sharpened" by the local smith shortly before, or riding recklessly as he did the horse might have suffered a fall, and Enoch been flung off. Nevertheless he could not keep up with Isaac Clark and his companions, so gradually fell behind. His steed's wind was sound, however, and he pursued the trail steadily.

The rescuers showed no hesitation in choosing their route. There were but a few beaten trails and they knew the road John Munro and his party would take with the prisoner to the bank of the Hudson. They could not miss it. The road from Arlington broke into this main trail at a point not far beyond the confines of Bennington and there it was at once apparent that the sledge and horsemen had passed that way not long before. There were plain marks of the runners and the ice and snow were cut up by the feet of the flying horses. The fact that the Yorkers numbered as many—if not more—than themselves, did not disturb the Green Mountain Boys in the least. "A Grants man who is not good for two or three of the scurvy Yorkers, is no good at all!" Stephen Fay had declared when

they set forth, and probably the only emotions the ten felt as they rode on were eagerness and wrath.

Meanwhile, behind them raced Enoch Harding, desiring mightily to "be in at the death," as the fox-hunters say. His heavy farmhorse could not compete with the mounts of the possé, however, and with tears in his eyes he saw them increase the distance between themselves and his animal. But he doggedly pursued the road, while the clatter of hoofs grew mellow in the distance. The morning was very still; the moon had sunk now and the stars were fading before the gray light of the coming day. In the east behind him the sky was even streaked with pink above the mountain-tops; the wind blew more keenly and he suddenly awoke to the fact that he was almost perished with the cold, for he had stopped for neither great-coat nor mittens.

Finally arriving at the top of a ridge of land he saw before him—at least two miles along the road and just mounting another ridge—a group of flying horses with a sledge in their midst, the prisoner and his captors.

At first he did not see the Green Mountain Boys at all; but as his own horse plunged down the slope he suddenly observed the squadron which had left the Bennington Inn, come out of the dip of the valley where the trees were thickest, and begin the ascent of the further ridge. The two parties were less than half a mile apart.

But from the elevation he was on Enoch had seen something else. The second ridge was lower than this and over it and not very far beyond he had caught a glimpse of the frozen Hudson! The river was not far away. Would the settlers catch the scoundrelly New York justice and his companions before they reached the river?

And this must be done if they would rescue Captain Baker. It was all very well to talk of following the party to Albany; but that would simply result in the imprisonment of all in the jail. Once at the river the Yorkers would be among friends and would find plenty of people to help them beat off the Green Mountain Boys. The latter understood this well enough. They did not need young Enoch Harding to tell them, and it was quite

evident to the boy that his friends were spurring their horses desperately up the farther slope in a last grand burst of speed to overtake the fugitives.

On and on they sped and finally, when Enoch reached the dip of the vale, Clark and his party were over the hill and had disappeared. The boy dared not urge his horse up the ascent too rapidly and he lost much precious time before reaching the summit. But once here he had a broad outlook over the slope and plain beyond and if he could not be present, at least he had an unobstructed view of the end of the chase. The Green Mountain Boys had spurred down the hill madly and gained upon the sledge so rapidly that the faint-hearted Yorkers were thrown into a panic. The horses attached to the sledge gave out and one of them slipped and fell in the harness. Instead of stopping to help Munro get the animal on its feet, the horsemen, with the fear of punishment from the angry pursuers before their eyes, rode on and scattered in the thick woods beyond, leaving the doughty justice to meet the possé alone. Munro was not a physical coward and

he felt that with the majesty of the law—New York law—behind him, he could face Baker's friends.

They bore down upon him with threatening cries, but he stood his ground and warned them at the top of his voice neither to shoot nor to try to rescue his prisoner. There was no need of firearms, of course, for they were ten to one now. But they laughed his authority to scorn. What! allow him to carry 'Member Baker to Albany to be tried by a judge who was himself interested in land speculations, and by a jury antagonistic to the settlers of the Grants? It was preposterous!

Baker, who suffered sorely from his wounds, was untied and placed upon one of the horses which could carry double. The possé felt ugly, but they did not harm the justice and after some wordy warfare rode away again, leaving Munro to get his horse up and harnessed again to the sledge without their help. His threats of future punishment for the entire party were unnoticed. Their wild ride had been crowned with success, for they had recovered their wounded comrade

within a mile of the Hudson River, and they took him home without any molestation.

But Captain Baker was weak from the loss of blood and terribly shaken by the experience and was in bed and under the care of a surgeon for some days. The news of the Yorkers' raid spread throughout the Grants and the settlers whose fears had been lulled to sleep by the peace of the winter, were roused to a realization of the fact that the land grabbers intended to be quite as active in the future as they had been in the past. The next training day the conversation of the Green Mountain Boys who were present in Bennington was bitter indeed. Cochran, and such reckless spirits, were for retaliating with fire and bullet on the New York border. Nevertheless Warner and other more moderate men counseled forbearance.

" We overawed the sheriff's army last year, it is true. But at that time we had given the people of New York no reasonable excuse for attacking us," declared Warner. " We've beech-sealed more than one surveyor and warned New York settlers off the farms they had stolen since then. We've been obliged to use

force and now force will be used against us. But I find that many of these New York settlers have been brought here under a misapprehension. They did not understand the controversy before they got the farms, and believed that the land-grabbers really owned the property of which they are in possession. To visit our righteous wrath upon helpless women and children will not help the cause of the Grants."

Many of his hearers, however, were not convinced. "'Member Baker's been beaten and his wife and boy ill-treated. What are we going to do about it?" was the demand.

"Complaint has already been made to Governor Tryon of New York, and John Munro may be punished by his own side for what he did the other night."

"And there's 'Member's gun," spoke up another ill-affected partisan. "Munro stole it and has got it to his house. I'm told so by a neighbor of his. 'Member thinks a deal of that gun."

"I'll get that," said Warner, quickly. "'Member shall have his property back before next training day."

And with that promise the disaffected spirits were satisfied for the time being. When Enoch rode away from Bennington on his return home that afternoon, the Connecticut giant overtook him on the road. Warner was a fine-looking man, younger even than Ethan Allen and idolized by the women and children of the community as Allen was by the men. But there was nothing effeminate about Warner. He was of the better class of borderers, possessing more education than most of his neighbors and with that measure of refinement and cultivation which placed George Washington above the majority of his associates. Warner had no patrician bearing, however, but entered into the work, sports and pursuits of his fellows. He was a superb horseman and rode on this day a mount which the governor of New York himself might covet.

Enoch Harding had grown used, by this time, to seeing these prominent leaders of the Grants and had spoken with Captain Warner before. "Master Harding, your road lies my way for some distance," declared Warner, smiling on the boy. "We will go together."

"You do not ride this way frequently, sir," said Enoch.

"Nay. But you heard my promise to-day. I must get 'Member's gun. That rascally Munro may have to be taught a lesson, too."

"But will you go alone?" cried the boy.

Warner laughed. "Why, it is a peaceful mission. See—I have not even my rifle—only my sword as captain of our military company. A show of force might only make matters worse—and dear knows they are bad enough as it stands."

"Munro will be among his friends, sir. Ought you not to have somebody with you?"

"There might be some doubt regarding that, Master Harding. A man like Munro is never blessed with an overabundance of friends. He may have minions that, for wage, would help him in his nefarious deeds. But I shall meet him when he least expects to see a Green Mountain Boy and I fear no serious trouble. But if you have doubt as to my safety," and he smiled again, "you may ride with me and see that the doughty 'Squire does not capture and run away with me as he attempted to with Captain Baker."

Enoch's eyes sparkled at this permission and he spurred on after Captain Warner although the direction was one which carried him some distance out of his way. A two hours' ride brought them to the settlement where the New York justice lived. Before they reached the place the figure of Warner was spied and recognized and Munro met the Green Mountain Boy in the roadway before his own house, surrounded by several of his neighbors. Enoch kept in the rear and as they rode up the boy unslung his gun and laid it across his saddle. Warner smiled as he noted this act, and then his face grew stern again as he drew rein before the much-hated Yorker.

"Master Munro," he said, without parley, "it has been brought to my attention that, upon your late evening visit to Captain Remember Baker, you carried away from his house a certain weapon which Captain Baker highly prizes. You mistook it for your own, I presume, and the duties of your office have doubtless been so onerous since then that you have not had opportunity to return it. Happening to be in this neighborhood I

have stopped to request the return of the gun."

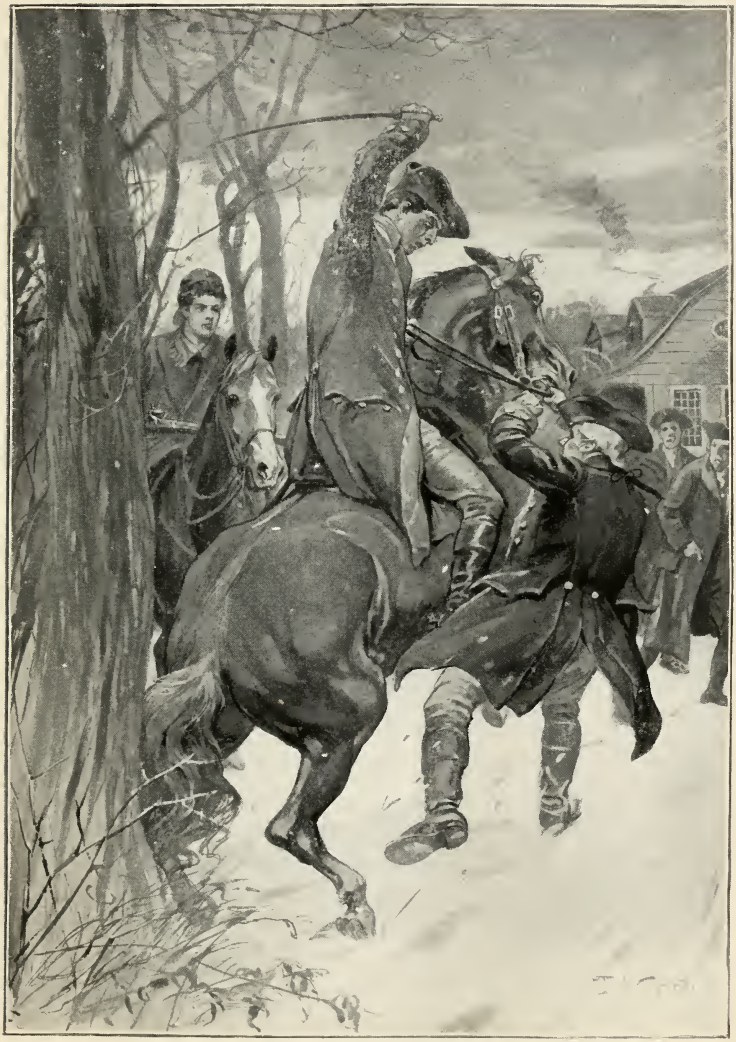
"Ha, ye rebel!" exclaimed Munro. "Dare ye put yourself in the lion's jaws in this way? I'll show ye ——"

"Whether I have put myself in the jaws of a lion or a jackal may be a question which is aside from our present discussion," interrupted Warner, scornfully. "I have come for Captain Baker's property."

"Baker is an outlaw—as are you," declared Munro, wrathfully, "and as such I took away his arms. An' I shall keep the gun."

"Now, 'Squire, if you had stated the reverse of that proposition I should have the more easily believed you," cried Warner, with flashing eyes. "Even a New York justice of the peace may not rob his neighbor with impunity in the Grants. I shall carry that gun away with me to-day. So, sir, deliver it without further ado!"

"Ye threaten me, do ye?" cried Munro, lashing himself into a rage. "Seize this villain, neighbors! I call on ye to assist in the capture of Seth Warner, the outlaw!" He



He Whipped out His Sword

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seized the bridle of Warner's horse, which reared with him and struck out angrily. But the justice hung on, still calling to the bystanders to interfere and help him. Enoch urged his own horse forward; but there was no fear of the neighbors aiding in Seth Warner's capture. They refused to do so, and perhaps as much out of fear of the Connecticut man himself, as out of dislike for the justice.

Warner's horse was a mettlesome beast and Munro's act in seizing the bridle angered it. The Green Mountain boy had all he could do to handle his steed for a moment and, as Munro continued to cling to the bridle, Warner suddenly whipped out his sword and whirling it about his head brought the flat of the weapon down upon the officer's pate! The blow caused Munro to relax his hold and knocked him to the ground, where he lay, roaring with pain and anger. Warner rode over him and approached the open door of the house to which Mrs. Munro, frightened by her husband's overthrow, quickly brought the gun in question and handed it to the victor.

"Many thanks, 'Squire Munro!" cried

Warner, waving the gun above his head and holding in his charger. "And when next ye seek to impound me, come in force, sir—come in force!" and letting his mount go, he and Enoch rode away at a swift canter.

Young Harding went home that night full of the afternoon's doings, and loud in his praise of Captain Warner's prowess. He and Bryce made many plans for the reception of the Yorkers if they came to their farm; but after this matters were quiet for some weeks and the settlers were enabled to begin the spring work and get the seed into the ground in peace. On May 19th Governor Tryon sent a letter to the Grants proposing a conference and promising amnesty to all those who had taken an active part in the raids of the Green Mountain Boys excepting Ethan Allen, Seth Warner, Baker and Robert Cochran. The King had commanded that New York do nothing further toward surveying or settling the lands east of Lake Champlain and the Twenty-Mile Line until the difficulty could be properly adjusted, and Tryon promised that the land-grabbers should be kept away from the Grants.

The farmers were delighted with this letter. They had been living in continual fear of dispossession since the first attack on the Breckenridge farm in '69. Now they felt that they would be free to follow the peaceful pursuits of their calling and began to improve their possessions, believing that, after all, the right would prevail. None were more pleased at this turn of affairs than the widow Harding and Enoch. Bryce, it must be confessed, felt a little disappointed that he had seen no active service; but they were all happy in their work and the Harding place bade fair to be one of the most profitable farms in the township that year.

The boys labored well and after the second corn hoeing in August the work was so far along that Enoch was able to accompany 'Siah Bolderwood on a hunting trip. The old ranger, lacking any regular abiding place of his own, often visited the Hardings and helped in the work of the farm. But he was a wanderer by nature and could not stay in one place long at a time. So, being off to the northward, the widow allowed Enoch to join him for a week or two.

It was not wholly game that Bolderwood was after, however. At least, not game for present killing. He was mapping out his next winter's campaign against the wild creatures of the forest. His strings of traps and dead-falls would be laid along the route which he and his young comrade traversed. Reaching the southern extremity of Lake Champlain Bolderwood found a canoe which, well hidden in a hollow log—all that remained of a monster king of the woodland—had lain untouched since his last visit to the lake. In this light bark they set sail upon that beautiful body of water on the shores of which the French and English had so often met in battle. It has been well said that the Champlain Valley was the school grounds of the early colonists, and that here were largely unfolded the elements of character which became of supreme importance in the Revolutionary struggle.

On the west bank of this lower, and narrower, portion of the lake, stood the frowning walls of Fort Ticonderoga—"Old Ti" as the settlers called it—wrested not long since from the French backed by their Huron and

Algonquin allies. That promontory signalized a more ancient landmark of history even than the Pilgrim stone at Plymouth, and one quite as important to our country at large. Eleven years before the Mayflower began her voyage to America, Champlain met the Iroquois in battle on the site of Ticonderoga, and this battle made the Iroquois the friends of the English and the enemies of the French for generations. Ticonderoga was an important link in the chain of French posts extending from the St. Lawrence to the Mississippi, which was designed to shut the English colonists into that narrow strip of the continent east of the Alleghanies.

From the beginning Fort Frederick (Crown Point) and Ticonderoga were a menace to the English. From these points the red allies of the French descended upon the border settlements to the south and burned and pillaged at pleasure. Two fearful campaigns were needed to reduce Ticonderoga and place the command of the Champlain in the hands of the British. Since its capture Ticonderoga had fallen somewhat into decay, for with the changing of the Canadian government from

French to English, danger of attack, even by Indian bands, from the north was little to be expected by the settlers who had flocked into the rich lands near the lake after the close of the war.

Bolderwood and his young comrade passed Old Ti and, continuing up the lake, paddled by Crown Point and reached the mouth of the Otter. Here they encamped for several days, hunting and fishing, and living in a nomadic fashion that charmed Enoch. But when they were about to return another party of hunters came to the spot—men whom Bolderwood knew—bound for the upper end of the lake and into the wilderness lying east of that point. Enoch could not go so far because of the work on the farm; but he urged Bolderwood to accompany this party, as he knew very well he could find his way home in safety by either the land or water route. In fact, he rather coveted the chance to make his way home alone, for he wished to prove to the ranger his ability to do for himself.

It was therefore arranged that the boy should take Bolderwood's canoe and go up Otter Creek to a certain settler's house, there

to leave the canoe and make his way overland to Bennington, and the next day they separated. The hunters did not start until afternoon on their northern journey, however, and Enoch left at the same time. Not far up the creek was a settlement of Hampshire farmers who on one occasion had been driven out by Yorkers in the employ of a Scotchman named Reid. But the Yorkers who had taken these farms stayed but a short time and the real owners of the property had come back the year before. Here Enoch expected to remain the first night of his lonely journey.

He did not arrive until late, however, and the houses were in darkness—indeed they seemed deserted. The mill (built by Colonel Reid's followers) stood silent, the stones having been broken by the Green Mountain Boys on the occasion of the driving out of the New York settlers. Enoch, having heard such good accounts of this settlement, was astonished by the appearance of inactivity.

Nevertheless he landed and soon found a stockade surrounding a blockhouse, which was evidently occupied. The people seemed to live under this single roof as though they

were in fear of an Indian raid, and the boy approached the place cautiously. He was not molested, however, for no watch was being kept; but when he rapped smartly on the door he knew by the sudden hush of voices within that the occupants of the dwelling were startled. There was the clatter of arms and a sudden command. Fearing that he might be treated as an enemy, Enoch knocked again and was about to raise his voice in the "view halloa" of the settlers, when the door was snapped open for an instant and the sharp blade of a sword thrust out of the darkness, the light of the candles having been quenched at his first summons.

The boy sprang back with an exclamation of fear, and only his agility saved him from serious injury, for the point of the sword cut a slit in his hunting coat. And the attack, so utterly unexpected, quite deprived him of speech or further motion as the heavy door slammed in his face. Such a welcome was, to say the least, disconcerting.

CHAPTER IX

THE OTTER CREEK RAID

THE late visitor at the Otter Creek settlement shrank away from the door and, dumbfounded by the sword-thrust which was evidently meant for his heart instead of his coat, waited to see what the next move of those in the blockhouse would be. He heard low voices and words which sounded like military commands. Suppose the occupants of the wooden fort should fire upon him?

At this idea he dropped upon all fours and it is perhaps well that he did so, for one bullet did come from a loophole, singing viciously above his head. Then an angry voice of command rose on the night air: "Haud yir hand, mon! Let's see an' it be fri'nd or foe." The tone and accent were broadly Scotch, and this, too, added to Enoch's amazement. He had not heard of Scotch people coming to Otter Creek since those placed there by Colonel Reid had been driven forth. At

once his suspicions were aroused, but he cried aloud:

"I am a friend and am alone. I only came for a night's lodging."

"'Tis a laddie, mon! There's naught t' fear," declared the voice within, as though answering some objection which Enoch could not hear. The candles were lighted and in another moment the door was opened again, revealing a tall, raw-boned Scot with a shock of red hair and beard. He grasped a bared sword, almost as big as a two-handed claymore, and he looked sternly upon the boy as the latter approached.

"Ha! 'tis wrang for a laddie t' be oot this time o' night," he declared. "Air ye sure alone?"

"Quite alone," Enoch replied. "I have been hunting west of here and we camped at the mouth of the creek. My comrades have gone northward and I was returning home by way of the creek. I did not know that the settlers here were in fear of Indians——"

"Ha! 'tis little we think o' them rid chiels. There's war nor they in yon forest-land, an' well we ken that."

"Who do you mean?" demanded Enoch, now stepping within the open door.

"Why, the robber Allen, an' his followers. We do oor wark wi' guns in oor han's for fear of them same outlaws. Eh, mon! but they're a bold mob."

Enoch made no reply, but advanced to the gun rack and stood up his rifle and dropped his pack. He knew now what had occurred at the settlement. The land-grabber Reid had come back to the Grants, ousted the Hampshire settlers, and again established minions of his own in their places. The boy glanced about and saw at least a dozen hardy looking Scots. Every one of them had doubtless served in Colonel Reid's regiment of Highlanders. They were descended from men almost as wild and bloodthirsty as the red Indians themselves, and although ordinarily they might be harmless enough, that thrust of the sword had shown Enoch that they were likely to fight first and inquire the reason for it afterward. They had come to Otter Creek in force this time, and evidently determined to battle for their master's holdings under the New York law.

But the man who had let him in, and who was a Cameron, was evidently bent upon treating hospitably the guest which he had so nearly run through with his sword. "Jamie Henderson," he said to one of the solemn faced Scots, "speir ane o' the wimmen t' gie us a bite for the lad," and the repast which was prepared and put before him was generous and kindly given. While he was eating and John Cameron sat by to watch him enjoy the food, Enoch gathered courage to ask a few questions.

"We heard down Bennington way that Colonel Reid's people had left this land and the settlers who formerly owned it had come back," he said, suggestively. The Scot's eyes contracted as he looked at the visitor. "Aye, aye?" he said, questioningly. "How long have you been here?" queried the boy.

"Sin' June. The men ye call settlers were nae proper holders o' their titles. Lieutenant-Colonel Reid bought this land and put fairmers here first."

"But he did not get his title from New Hampshire," Enoch said.

"Nae—w'y should he? New York owns

the land to yon big river—th' Connecticut call ye it? Our fri'nds settled here in '69. The titles these auld settlers held wes no guide—na, na! But Colonel Reid is a guide mon—'deed yes."

"How do you make that out?" demanded Enoch. He wanted to tell the Scot what he thought of this business, but he dared not. He knew Ethan Allen and the other leaders of the Green Mountain Boys should know of it, and as he, perhaps, was the first to learn of the return of the Scotch, he must get away early in the morning and reach Bennington in the quickest possible time. While the Grants men were resting in supposed safety and peace because of Governor Tryon's letter promising inactivity on the part of the land speculators, the latter were hurrying their minions over the line, evicting the rightful owners of the Grants, and stealing their farms. The boy's heart swelled with anger; but he was wise enough to hold his tongue and say nothing to rouse the suspicions of the Scots.

In reply to his question regarding Colonel Reid's "guideness" Cameron told how he,

with other Scots, had landed in New York early in June and had been engaged by the Colonel at once to go and occupy his land in the Disputed Territory. Reid came with them to the settlement, being at considerable expense to transport them, their wives, children and baggage. The day after their arrival while viewing the land covered by Reid's title, they observed a crop of Indian corn, wheat, and garden stuff, and a stack of hay belonging to two New England men who, according to Cameron, had squatted on the land without right or title. Reid paid these two men $15 for their standing crops and the hay and made over the same to his new tenants. This was a novel way of telling how the owners of the titles to the farms received from the New Hampshire governor years before, were evicted. But Enoch held his peace. He had considerable doubt in his own mind regarding Colonel Reid's "guideness," nevertheless, and rose early in the morning and left the settlement in Bolderwood's canoe. Instead of keeping on up the Otter he turned back to the lake. The route by which he and the ranger had come from Bennington would be

far shorter than the one he had started upon; so he went back that way. News of the return of Reid's people must be conveyed to Ethan Allen and the other leaders of the Green Mountain Boys as quickly as possible.

He scarcely stopped for food, so anxious was he to get home. He met nobody on his trip until he reached Manchester and there his story was hardly believed, for the letter of the New York governor in May, inviting the Grants representatives to a council, had made a strong and favorable impression upon public sentiment. This council had advised that all legal processes against the Grants settlers cease and even now the echoes had not died away of the jubilation of the deluded people over what was considered the end of the bitter controversy.

But when he arrived at home and told his mother of his discovery she, like the truly patriotic woman she was, became vastly disturbed. "You may not rest idly here, Enoch, while such wrong is being done. Colonel Allen should know of it at once. He rode past here but yesterday on his way to Ben-

nington, and gave us a cry. He asked for you, too," she said, with pride, " and told me how well you carried yourself at training. There is a council being held in town to-day, I believe, for I suspect that Colonel Allen and Captain Warner have not been deceived by the false promises of Governor Tryon. And this business at the Otter Creek will wake up many of those who would cry ' Peace ! ' when there is no peace. Bryce will saddle the horse for you, Enoch," she added, " and while you eat I will prepare your best breeches and coat. You cannot appear at the inn before the gentlemen in your old clothing."

The careful woman bustled away and laid out her son's Sabbath suit and his boughten shoes and, tired as Enoch was, he rode away toward Bennington an hour after reaching the ox-bow farm.

As his mother had declared, Colonel Allen and several other leaders were in conference in Stephen Fay's private parlor, and when he had whispered his story to the innkeeper, the latter brought him at once before the gentlemen, rightly considering the matter of such importance as to brook no delay in the tell-

ing. Never before had Enoch seen Ethan Allen in any capacity but that of a leader in action. In the boy's mind he had ever been connected with scenes of riot, or in the capacity of a commander on training day. But it was a very serious looking group which surrounded the table now, and the man at the head of the board lacked nothing in dignity and stern bearing in comparison with the other members of the committee.

It was Allen, however, who turned from the subject under discussion and beckoned Master Fay and Enoch nearer. "What have we here?" he asked. "Something of moment, I warrant, from the look on Stephen's face. And there is young Nuck Harding. Is aught amiss in your district, lad?"

"Nay, Colonel," Enoch replied; "but I have been in the north and bring back news that my mother was sure you would wish to hear at once. So I rode over without delay to tell you, sir."

"God bless the woman!" Allen exclaimed, heartily. "She's fighting away there in the wilderness with her pack of babies in a way to make grown men blush. I was by there

but yesterday. . . . And what's the news you bring, Nuck?"

"The Yorkers have come back to the mill on Otter Creek."

"What, sir?" cried Allen, leaping from his chair.

"That's not to be believed," cried one of the others. "How know ye this, boy?"

Enoch told them, using few words; but the tremor in his voice showed the depth of his feeling. The injury done the settlers—the treachery of the Yorkers—had affected him as it had his mother. Allen listened with marked attention, having dropped back into his wide-armed chair, but he watched the boy's countenance the while. "Egad!" cried he when the story was done, "there's a boy after my own heart. He knows when he sees a snake in the brush!" Then he turned instantly to his companions. "We will postpone this other matter, gentlemen. What we may do in the event of his Majesty's placing other and more onerous burdens upon these colonies, affects us not so nearly as what these New York Tories do to us now. We have no standing either with the colonies or

with the King; we are outlaws, forsooth; our hand is against every man's and every man's hand against us. Yet, belike in time the trouble between the King and the colonies may be the salvation of the Hampshire Grants.

"We have other business now. I am away at once, friends," he said, rising again. "Do so to me and more also, if I allow more time than is necessary to pass before I fall upon those Scotch scoundrels and smite them hip and thigh! Send the word around, Stephen Fay. Let them that will gather here. Be sure Warner knows of this; I will send for 'Member myself. His company will be first ready, I have no doubt. 'Member's wound is scarce yet healed, and the sting of it needs dressing," and he laughed, knowing Captain Baker's fiery temper and his hatred of the Yorkers who had served him so evilly that very spring. "Let it be known that we start from Bennington by sunrise."

Enoch returned home, more than a little puffed with pride because of Colonel Allen's commendation and although he was too young to join the party which, under Allen

and Captain Baker, marched to punish the Scots at Vergennes, he knew that his fortunate discovery would make him something of a hero in the eyes of his mates. The Green Mountain Boys fell upon the Scots unexpectedly, burned the cabins, pastured their horses in the standing corn, broke the millstones to pieces, and drove the New York settlers to Crown Point where they took shelter until the land-speculator, Reid, could gain them transportation to other and more honestly acquired lands. As for Reid himself, had he been overtaken by the Grants men he certainly would have been "viewed"—a phrase used by the Green Mountain Boys, meaning to be whipped. The settlement was, however, for the time being abandoned by both parties, for it was so deep in the wilderness that neither could properly defend it from attack.

CHAPTER X

THE WARNING

After his return from this hunting trip, Enoch Harding was forced to neglect the training days on several occasions because of the increased work at home. The harvest was soon upon them and nobly had the fields of the ox-bow farm borne for the widow and her children. While they were hard at work getting under cover, or in stack, the last of their crops, the Manchester Convention was held, from which James Breckenridge and Captain Jehiel Hawley were sent to London to represent the struggling settlers, their former minister to the king, Samuel Robinson, having died before accomplishing the work which he had so well begun.

With the discovery that Governor Tryon's declaration of an armistice had been an act of treachery, and that the Yorkers were likely to continue their raids and seize the honestly purchased lands of the New Hampshire set-

tlers, as Colonel Reid had at Vergennes, the Hardings began to fear the return of Simon Halpen again. But the summer and fall passed without the little family being alarmed. With the snow came hog-killing, and among pioneer people this season was usually one of rejoicing. In the old times it had been a sort of festival, for with the first fall of snow all danger from marauding bands of red men ceased. The Indians would not send out war parties when every footstep would be plainly visible to the white settlers. The pioneers longed for the snow as soon as their scanty crops were out of the field, for they were safe then until the spring. So instead of celebrating "harvest home" they rejoiced at "hog killing time."

The Hardings had quite a drove of hogs which ran wild in the forest during the summer and fed on the mast in the fall. But every few days the widow fed them near the hovel, so as to keep them in the habit of coming home, and particularly to teach the youngsters where to come if the old swine should be killed by bears or wild-cats. Now the whole drove was brought up and

"folded" and for two weeks every member of the family was busy. During that time the bulk of their winter's meat was salted down, the toothsome sausage made, and all the other delicacies which old-fashioned folks knew so well how to prepare from the pig. Somebody has said that at our present day abatoirs they can put to some use every part of the animal but the pig's squeal; pioneer housewives were almost as economical.

When the hard work was over Mistress Harding allowed the children to invite some of the neighborhood youngsters for an evening frolic and such a gathering had not been enjoyed since the famous stump burning. Enoch was nearly sixteen now and although Bryce was almost as tall as his elder brother, the first named was broadening out wonderfully. Few young men of Bennington under nineteen could have thrown Enoch in a match of strength, and he had really become the head of the household. But he was still enough of a boy to enjoy the party to the full.

There was an old hovel near the house, but nearer the river bank, which their father had first erected—even before building the house

itself—when he came to the ox-bow, and for years this hovel had sheltered the cattle. But the fall before he died the pioneer had erected a new and better stable and shed, quite handy to the house. The children, therefore, had long considered this hovel their own especial playhouse. At spare moments Enoch and Bryce built a stone and clay chimney and laid a good hearth in the old structure, and now they planned to have the party here, where they could do quite as they pleased.

The girls had scoured the woods for beech, hazel, and hickory nuts, and Robbie Baker came over on his horse with nigh a bushel of peeled chestnuts which his father brought him from Manchester way after the first frost. Then, there were potatoes to roast and a wild turkey which Nuck had shot two days before and hung in the smoke-house. The bird was not plucked, but after being entrailed was stuffed with chestnuts to give it a flavor and then rolled in the tub of sticky clay brought up from the creek bottom. This great ball was put in the fire early so that by supper-time it would be done to a turn. The pigs' tails had all been saved and cleaned, too, and

being likewise rolled in clay were baked in the ashes.

The girls had brought flour bread and made Johnny-cake, and although there was no table-cloth, the long board table was roomy and fairly groaned under the good things heaped upon it. The ball of mud, all hard and red now and cracked like a badly burned brick, was rolled out upon the hearth and Enoch broke it with one blow of the axe. The hard shell fell apart and to the burned clay adhered every feather and pin-quill of the great gobbler which would not have weighed an ounce less than twenty-five pounds. And the flesh was done to a turn.

In the midst of the good time, while the fun waxed furious, the door of the hovel opened and there stood in the opening the tall, slim figure of Crow Wing. As he had come unbidden to the stump burning, so he came now unexpectedly to this frolic. The white children welcomed him boisterously, for his people had moved away from the Walloomscoik and for months he had not been seen near Bennington. But Crow Wing had evidently not come to join in the merrymak-

ing. His face was impassive and much older in expression than it had been the year before. And in his hair was a bunch of eagle feathers which showed that, to his own people even, he was now a brave and no longer a boy.

"Umph!" he grunted, drawing the blanket draped from his shoulders more closely around him. "Harding—me talk to you!" He looked boldly at Enoch, and the latter waving the others back, followed the Indian out of the hovel. Without speaking or looking behind him Crow Wing led the white boy to the riverside, and some distance from the hovel. There he halted and pointed suddenly across the stream in the direction of that place in the forest where Enoch had once seen the mysterious white man sitting beside the campfire.

"'Member?" asked Crow Wing, flashing a keen glance at the white boy.

"The man in the woods!" exclaimed Enoch. "You wish to tell me something about him?"

"Umph! He come again. Look out. Crow Wing tell you, because white boy strong —know how to fight. Watch 'em sharp!"

and with this brief declaration the Indian youth strode away and the astonished Enoch watched him disappear in the tall brush along the creek bank. He went back to the merry party at the hovel with a heavy heart and not until after the last of the visitors had gone home—the boys swinging pine torches and giving the warwhoop to scare off any lurking wolves or catamounts—did Enoch find opportunity to tell his mother of Crow Wing's warning.

"Simon Halpen is surely coming to evict us," he declared. "I am sure it was he I saw in the forest last year. And now, taking advantage of our being lulled by hopes of peace, he will try to strike an unexpected blow as Colonel Reid did."

"The neighbors will help us," the widow said.

"But suppose he comes with a big force? And we cannot expect the neighbors to neglect their own homes," said Enoch. "I will try and see Captain Baker, if you think it best, mother."

"Captain Baker will help us. He knows how hard it would be if the Yorkers stripped

us of our all. He is a kind-hearted man, though often rude and fretful."

"Well, marm, he has cause to be fretful," said Enoch. "Perhaps we can get a few of the boys to stay with us nights for awhile."

And this they did, for Captain Baker sent three or four sturdy Green Mountain Boys around to the widow's farm every night for a week. But the Yorker and his crew did not appear. At this time, when he might have been of such assistance to them, 'Siah Bolderwood was away. He had recently bought a track of land on the lake shore not far from Old Ti and had gone to look it over and build some sort of a camp there, thus utilizing his time to good advantage before the trapping season began.

Even after their fears were lulled, either Enoch or Bryce remained always in sight of the house. But about a fortnight after the hog-killing frolic an incident occurred which served to take both Bryce and Enoch away from the cabin. There had been a second fall of snow and the nights were becoming very cold. But all the wild animals had not yet sought their winter sleeping quarters, for there

descended upon the Hardings' hog-pen an old bear who evidently desired one more meal of succulent pork before retiring to his burrow. The remaining swine were shut up now in a close yard of logs; but the bear got over that fence with ease.

The trouble occurred in the early morning and aroused by the clamor Enoch, despite the inch or two of snow on the ground, grabbed the rifle and ran out just as he got out of bed and without shoes or stockings. But when he saw the huge bear seeking to climb out of the enclosure, hugging a lively shote to his furry breast, the boy was not likely to notice the cold and snow. He climbed the end logs of the hog-pen himself so as to get a shot at the marauder, and rested the rifle on the top rail; but the logs were slippery and just as he pulled the trigger he went down himself and the charge flew high over the bear's head, while Enoch sprawled most ungracefully on the ground.

The old bear uttered a wild "oof-oof!" and without trying to climb the barrier again, flung his huge body against it and a length of the fence went down with a crash. By this

time Bryce, who had kept the old musket by his side since Crow Wing's warning, and slept in the loft, was aroused by the disturbance, and he pushed up the corner of the bark roof and blazed away at the beast just as it scrambled through the wreck of the hog fence. The bear had continued to cling to the squealing and kicking shote, for bruin is a strangely perverse and obstinate creature, unwilling to give up what he has once set his mind upon. There was a wild shriek of agony from the poor pig and when the bear moved clumsily away still clinging to the porker there was a broad trail of blood on the snow.

"I shot him! I shot him!" yelled Bryce, dodging down into the loft and beginning to hastily pull on his breeches. But when he came down-stairs Enoch had returned to the house and was calmly dressing. "Why didn't ye foller him?" demanded the younger boy. "He's bad wounded. He'd dropped that shote in a minute."

"You killed the shote all right," said Enoch in disgust. "Neither of the shots touched the bear at all. There's no use chas-

ing after the critter now. We'll wait till after breakfast. He won't go far, lugging that shote."

The bear was fat and in the best possible condition for salting down for winter use. So even Mrs. Harding had no objection to make when the boys started after breakfast to follow the trail. She herself, with the help of the younger children, collected the hogs in the pen again and put up the log fence. Meanwhile Nuck and Bryce found that the bear had made for a piece of swamp about two miles away. The swamp was close grown with saplings and brush, while here and there a monster tree shot skyward. Some of these big trees were so old that they had become hollow and without doubt there was more than one lair of wild creatures in the swamp.

But it was easy enough to follow the early morning visitor to the cabin. After carrying the shote into the edge of the swamp, bruin had stopped and made a hasty meal upon the porker. Indeed the boys, who started on his trail scarcely two hours after the raid had been committed, undoubtedly disturbed him at his

repast. The shote was not completely eaten when they found the bear's breakfast-table. "It is a mighty big bear anyway," Bryce declared, looking at the marks of the marauder's feet. "He couldn't have brought that pig so far if he hadn't been."

"He warn't big enough for you to hit," said Nuck, slyly.

"Huh! guess you can't crow any," responded the younger boy. "You missed him good and wide, too."

They hurried on then, easily tracking the big, human-like spoor of the bear in the soil which here was not frozen. Indeed, in some places they "slumped in" rather deeply. The bear seemed to have picked out his path by instinct. But he could not hide his trail and before long the hunters came to a huge tree standing amid a clump of brush on the top of a hillock. The high ground was surrounded by water and rather hard to come at; but the boys were determined to get the bear after chasing it so far. They approached with caution, however, Enoch making Bryce remain in the rear.

"If I fire and don't kill him you must be

in reserve with your gun," he whispered cautiously. "He'd be an ugly customer if he turned on us. He's as big as a steer."

"Huh! who's afraid?" demanded Bryce.

"Jest you remember how father was killed," Enoch said, gravely. "Who'd ha' believed a bull-deer could kill an old hunter like him? You do as I say!"

So Bryce dropped behind and watched his brother crawl up the side of the hummock with infinite caution, parting the brush with the barrel of his rifle, which he held in readiness to use at any instant. Suddenly, from the heart of the brush clump, there sounded an angry growl. The bear was not to be taken unawares. And when a big bear growls in anger the sound is hair-raising to the uninitiated. Bryce felt a chill in the region of his spine and if his old cap did not actually rise off his head, it certainly felt as though it would. He was to one side of Nuck's position so as not to get his brother between him and the bear should the creature come forth, and suddenly he saw the shaggy head and shoulders of the beast rise up over the brush. It looked enormous and when

the bear opened its jaws, and displayed its great teeth and blood-red gums, it was indeed a fearsome spectacle.

"Shoot him! shoot him!" exclaimed Bryce, excitedly. But Nuck remained comparatively cool—at least, to all appearance. He stood up, too, with the rifle at his shoulder. The bear stretched wide his great fore-paws and plunged forward to seize the boy; but the rifle spoke and the smoke of the piece hid the creature for a moment.

When the cloud passed there was a great commotion in the brush, and Bryce saw that Nuck had darted back several paces and was rapidly loading his gun again. The younger boy could not see the bear; but it was badly wounded without doubt. The thrashing in the brush told that. Recovering his courage he pushed forward and finally saw the huge brown body on the ground, writhing in the muscular activity which follows death. The charge of Nuck's rifle had reached a vital spot.

But something more Bryce saw. A second bear had followed the dead one from the hollow tree, and the boy observed this one whisk

back into the dark opening between two roots. The tree was all of a dozen feet in circumference and there was doubtless a good-sized cavity in the tall trunk. "Come on! come on!" cried Bryce, excitedly. "Here's another, Nuck."

"Have a care, boy!" responded the older lad. "Don't go too near. It may turn on us." He hastily finished the loading of his rifle and came up the hill again. They could see the entrance to the lair plainly; but no sight could they get of the second bear. Bryce brought a handful of clods and flung one after another into the hole in the tree. The bear did not even growl, so they were pretty sure that the missiles had not reached it. "He's climbed up inside," declared Nuck. "I warrant that tree's holler up to the first crotch."

"What'll we do?" demanded Bryce. "You shot that one, Nuck. Now I wanter git the other, before we go home."

"We'll smoke him out," declared the elder brother. "You stay right here and watch, and I'll get some wood." Nuck had brought a tomahawk which, with his skinning knife,

was thrust into his belt. With the hatchet he obtained dry branches from the lower limbs of some spruce-trees which grew near, and packed a big fagot through the mire to the hillock where Bryce stood guard. This wood he flung into the mouth of the lair, started the fire with his flint and steel, and when the flames began to wreathe the branches hungrily, he flung on leaves and grass to make a "smudge." His suspicions regarding the hollowness of the tree proved true, for the draft through the hollow bole acted like a chimney and sucked the smoke upward. It began to wreathe out between the first limbs, some thirty feet or more from the ground.

Suddenly there was a great clatter and scraping of claws inside the tree and then there popped out between the branches the head and shoulders of a smaller bear than the one which now lay still in the bushes. "Wait till he gits out!" shouted Nuck, as the excited Bryce raised his musket. "If you shoot him there he'll tumble back into the hole."

Bryce was cool enough to see the wisdom

of this advice and stay his hand. But in a moment the bear was completely out and then he fired. The bullet struck home and the bear lost its hold upon the limbs and dropped to the ground, landing with fearful force at the roots of the tree. But it was not dead and after a moment's struggle, got upon its feet again. But the shock had dazed it and for a little it could neither see its assailants nor find any means of escape. Nuck ran in, placed the muzzle of his rifle within a foot of the creature, and finished it off with despatch.

Bryce was dancing about and yelling like a wild Indian; but it was not for joy over the death of this second bear. He was pointing on high and Nuck looked upward to see a third bear in the tree-top. This one had followed the second out of the hollow trunk and was mounting among the branches with great agility. The smoke pouring up through the hollow had driven the whole family into the open air. The Hardings reloaded their guns with despatch and then, on either side of the tree, fired at the remaining bear. Both bullets went true, but in falling the bear became

wedged in the crotch of a big limb and Nuck, throwing aside his shoes and stockings, essayed to climb the trunk to push the dead beast off to the ground.

This was no simple matter, for all he had to cling to were the knots and "warts" on the side of the trunk. It was almost like climbing up the wall of a house. But he reached the first crotch finally and after resting a spell, found the remainder of the climb easy enough. Before he pushed the carcass of the bear out of its resting-place he took an observation of the forest, for he was high above the swamp here and could see beyond the creek. In some way they would have to get the carcasses to the creek bank and transport them to the cabin by canoe. It would be no easy task.

And as he scanned the stretch of river which he could see from his high perch he suddenly observed something which almost caused him to lose his hold upon the tree and fall, like the bear, to the ground. Coming up the stream were two canoes, each paddled by a couple of Indians, and with three white men in each craft. Even at that distance

Enoch knew them to be strangers, and they were not a hunting party. Naturally his mind reverted to the warning Crow Wing had brought him a fortnight before, and without stopping to dislodge the dead bear, he descended the tree in utmost haste.

"Why don't you push the bear off?" shouted Bryce from below.

Nuck leaned over and placed his finger on his lips, shaking his head warningly. Then he slid down the remainder of the way, falling in a heap on the carcass of the second bear. "Quick!" he gasped, seizing his shoes and stockings. "They're coming."

"What's coming?"

"The Yorkers. I seen 'em on the river. Two canoes full."

"Simon Halpen!" exclaimed the younger boy, his face blanching.

"I don't know. Couldn't tell any of 'em so far away. But they be'n't Bennington men, that's sure." Nuck was hastily pulling on his stockings. "You run back and tell mother. I'll watch 'em till they land and see what they intend to do."

"But the bears ——" began Bryce.

"We'll have to leave 'em. That one in the tree will be all right for a while for sure. Now hurry."

Bryce obeyed at once and a moment later the elder boy started off in the other direction for the bank of the creek. He ran carefully, however, so as not to make any noise and thus warn the canoe party of his presence. In half an hour he was abreast of the boats, for they progressed but slowly up the stream. Here he had a good view of the men. In the first canoe he saw Crow Wing and another young Indian of his tribe, while the paddlers in the second were likewise Iroquois. The white men were Yorkers he was sure, and all were heavily armed.

As he scrutinized the whites his eyes rested finally on one man in the leading canoe whom he was sure he had seen before. He could not mistake that lean, dark face and hooked nose. Whether or not it was the person he had seen in the wood the day of Sheriff Ten Eyck's fiasco at the Breckenridge farm, he was certain of the man's identity. It was Simon Halpen who, under a New York patent,

claimed territory on the Walloomscoik, a part of which the Harding farm was.

Dodging from tree to tree, the boy followed the canoes and finally, before they came in sight of the Harding house, saw the party land. The Indians remained with the canoes; but the white men disembarked with considerable baggage. One of the men carried a surveyor's instrument, while a second bore a chain. Halpen led them and when he had seen the party strike into the forest in the direction of the house, Enoch sped away on a parallel trail and headed them off, arriving first at the destination.

He found that his mother and the children had already put up the shutters and made ready to receive the Yorkers. The cattle were shut in the yard surrounding the barn and the smaller children were put in their mother's bed to be out of the way. Bryce went into the loft where he could watch for the appearance of the enemy; but Enoch remained outside the door, his rifle in the hollow of his arm, ready to parley with the Yorkers who soon were reported by Bryce as coming through the lower fields.

CHAPTER XI

AN UNEQUAL BATTLE

A MASTERFUL spirit had entered into Enoch Harding during the past few months. He was no longer a child; he thought and acted as a man in many things. Now, with this danger threatening them all, he did not shrink from the ordeal, and none might know his inmost feelings from the expression of his face. He did not speak to his mother, nor did she seek to advise him. Long before they had talked this emergency over, and it had been agreed that the homestead must and should be defended even to the point of firing on the Yorkers who might come to dispossess them. The legal authority claimed by Simon Halpen was not recognized in the Grants and did the Hardings put themselves in Halpen's power by agreeing to let the New York authorities arbitrate the matter, they would lose all that they had toiled and suffered for during the past ten years.

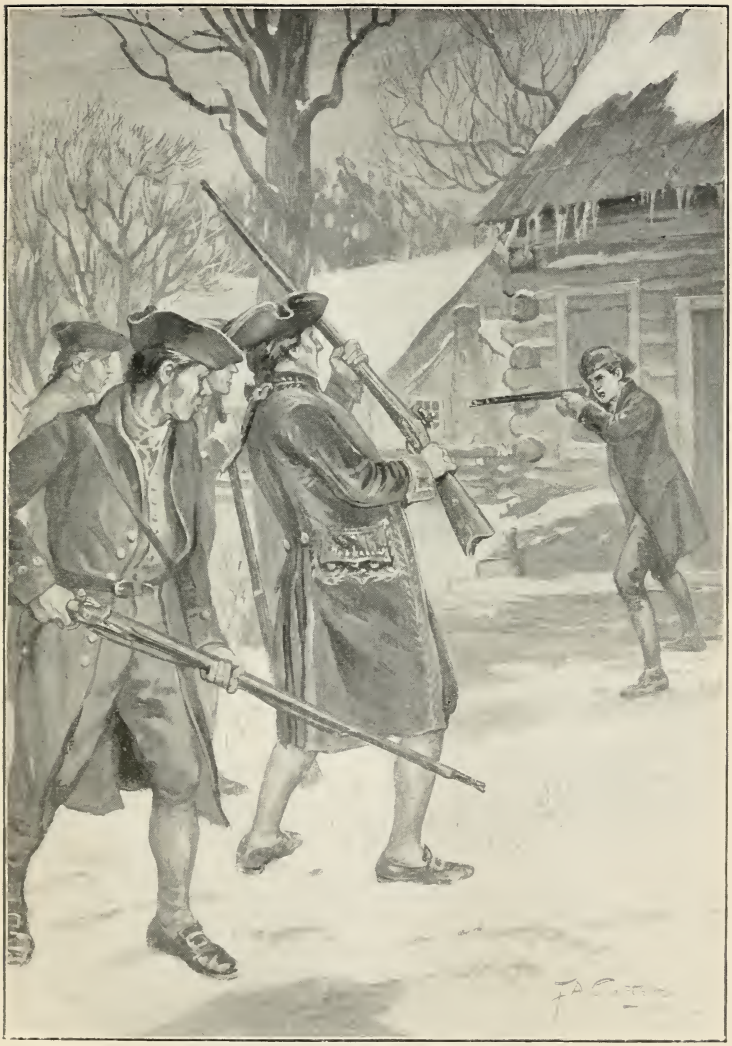
The widow saw that the windows of the cabin were shuttered and that Bryce had both powder and bullets beside him in the loft. Then she went into her own chamber and falling upon her knees prayed as only a mother can whose children are in bodily and imminent danger. How far the Yorkers would dare go—to what lengths Halpen might force the fight for the ox-bow farm—it was impossible even to imagine. He was a cruel and unscrupulous man, but he had already had a taste of the temper of the Bennington settlers and perhaps the remembrance of the beech-sealing which had been dealt out to him two years and more before, would make him chary of coming to blows.

Soon the six Yorkers appeared around the corner of the log fence which enclosed the cattleyard. Four of them, including Halpen, were armed with guns. The surveyor and his assistant carried their tools only, and walked in the rear of the more warlike quartette. Their leader, his lean, black face clouded by a threatening scowl, strode across the home lot and approached the cabin door. His beady eyes glittered and when he was enraged his

hooked nose seemed to glow a dull red beneath the dusky skin, like a half-heated iron.

Simon Halpen was much better dressed than the citizens of Bennington were apt to be, and he carried himself haughtily. His hair was done carefully and the queue tied with a silk ribbon. His rifle was silver-mounted and his powder-horn was partly of silver filagree work. In every way—dress, accoutrements and manner—he bore out the account the Hardings had received of him, that he was a wealthy and proud man. The three other armed men were fellows of the baser sort, hired at Albany for the purpose of driving the widow and her children from their home.

Enoch Harding thought this as he saw the party approach, and his heart beat faster while his cheeks were dyed with crimson. Should these men march up and deprive his mother and brothers and sisters of their home? Not as long as he held a gun and had powder and shot with which to load it! The fearful thought of shooting down one or more of these men in cold blood did not shock him now. The bitterness which filled his heart



THE BOY STOOD LIKE A STATUE

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against Simon Halpen overbore any other emotion. He raised his rifle threateningly and cried aloud: "Halt there—halt I say! What d'ye want on our land?"

The three retainers of Halpen, as well as the surveyor and his 'prentice, halted instantly, but Simon strode on, his eyes blazing and his great nose growing ruddier as his rage increased. "Your land—your land, forsooth!" he exclaimed. "I'll teach ye better than that, ye young viper!"

Instantly Enoch had his rifle to his shoulder and had drawn bead upon the Yorker. The muzzle of the weapon covered Halpen's heart. The boy stood like a statue—there was no trembling to his young arms. "Back! If you come a yard nearer I will fire!" he cried. He did not recognize his own voice, but Halpen heard him plainly and was impressed with his earnestness. He stopped suddenly, half raising his own gun. "Don't do that!" cried Enoch, instantly. "Keep your gun down. Why, I have but to press this trigger and you will drop where you are! Be warned."

"Hi, captain," growled one of his support-

ers, "the little varmint means it. Have a care."

"You—you ——" Halpen only sputtered for a moment. He could not find words to properly express his rage. "I believe on my life, he would shoot me."

"I certainly will, Master Simon Halpen, if you come nearer. You are quite near enough. You have come here for no good purpose. We own this land—my father paid for it and has improved it. He may be dead, but we will show you how we can defend the place from you Yorkers."

"You crow loud, my young cock-o'-th'-walk!" exclaimed Simon Halpen, yet seeking to come no nearer the boy. "But you cannot hope to stand before his Majesty's officers—though some of you vagabond Whigs have become bold of late. Know ye that I bear authority from the loyal governor of his Majesty's Colony of New York, to turn you off this land, which is mine and has been mine for these six years."

"And I have told you that you cannot come here and drive us off, for we shall fight ye!" declared Enoch, his anger rising. "And

what be more, Master Halpen, though ye might succeed in driving us off, ye could not hold this land. It is too near Bennington, and ye know well what sort of men Bennington folk are, and what they would do to you."

At this reminder of his former embarrassment, when caught by the neighbors and "viewed," Simon Halpen flew into a towering rage. He shook his rifle in the air as he berated the fearless youth. "Have a care with that gun, Master Halpen," said Enoch, "for it might go off by accident. And if such a thing should happen I would shoot you down—'deed and I would!"

This warning cooled the man's ardor somewhat. For a full minute he stood silent eyeing Enoch from under his shaggy brows. "Would you dare flout me to my face?" he demanded.

"I dare keep my rights here, Master Halpen, as my father did before me," said Enoch, his voice trembling for the first time. And at the mention of the dead and gone Jonas Harding more than Enoch were moved. Halpen's manner changed; his face paled perceptibly; the fire died out of his eyes and his

nose no longer glowed. He dropped his head and half turned as though to leave the spot.

But suddenly one of his retainers stepped forward and whispered in his ear. The whisper brought the leader to his old mind. His head came up and he flashed a look of bitter hatred at Enoch. He nodded to the man who had spoken and instantly the three armed retainers began to quietly spread out as though to surround the house. "I'll parley no longer with you, my lad," Halpen said, shortly. "This land is mine and you are naught but squatters on it. And as such you shall be put off, or my name is not Simon Halpen!"

Quick as thought Enoch darted backward to the house, for he had noted the action of the three men. "It is fighting you want, then, Master Halpen?" cried the boy, shrilly. "And you will get bullets instead of fair words if you press us—now I tell ye that! This is our home and we shall fight for it."

"Stop the young rascal!" roared Halpen, raising his gun now in earnest, when he saw that Enoch no longer had him "covered."

But the boy dodged into the house and slammed to the heavy door. As he did so a bullet buried itself in the door frame. Halpen had actually fired.

The widow herself dropped the bars into place, for she had come out of her chamber and heard the conversation between her son and the Yorker. Now Enoch ran to one of the loopholes from which he could observe the movements of the man who had shot at him in so cowardly a manner. He saw that the surveyor, who had thus far kept in the background, was expostulating with the angry man. He could not hear what they said, but it was evident that the surveyor was a man of some conscience and could not see such murderous actions without striving to put Halpen in better mind. But the latter shook him off in rage and loaded his gun again. The house was now surrounded by the four armed men and the three understrappers were only waiting Halpen's command to fire.

"Shall I shoot him? shall I shoot him?" cried Bryce, from the loft.

"Hold your fire!" commanded Enoch.

"You may have blood on your hands yet, if you be not careful."

"But he fired at you."

"And a poor job he made of it. We will not fire unless we are forced to."

His mother said never a word. She went into her chamber again and with the girls and little Harry crouched upon the bed. But she glanced frequently from the loophole to observe the movements of the Yorker upon that side of the clearing.

By and by Halpen raised his voice and addressed the besieged. "Open the door and come out, or we will batter it down. And it will go hard with you then, I warrant! If you give up the place peaceably you may cart away your household stuff and the cattle and hogs. I'll not be too hard on you."

"If you come near this door I will send a bullet through your black heart!" was Enoch's reply, poking the muzzle of his rifle through the loophole beside which he stood.

The widow came running from the chamber. "Enoch! Enoch!" she cried, in horror. "Would you kill him?"

"He killed my father!" cried the boy,

before he thought what explanation of his secret suspicions that remark might necessitate.

"The child is mad!" she murmured, after staring at him a full minute. "You do not know what you say, Enoch. Master Halpen had naught to do with your poor father's death."

But Enoch had not to reply. A cry came from Bryce in the loft. "Look at that! Look at that!" he shouted, with excitement. "I just will shoot him!"

And then his old musket spoke. There was a yell from without. Enoch thought Simon Halpen himself had been shot, but the Yorker only ran around the end of the cabin to where one of his men stood howling like a wolf, and holding on to his swinging arm.

"I've broke his arm!" declared Bryce, proudly, coming to the head of the ladder. "He was flinging blazing clods on the roof."

"What shall we do?" gasped the mother. "My boys will be murderers."

"I'll kill them all before they'll harm you, mother," declared young Bryce, very proud

indeed that he had hit the mark, but secretly delighted as well that he had done the villainous Yorker no serious damage.

But the moment after, he shrieked aloud and came again to the top of the ladder. His face was blanched. "Oh, oh! they've done it—they've done it!" he cried. "The roof is afire. Don't you smell it?"

Enoch could not believe that this horror was true until he had run up to the loft. The red flames were already showing at the edge of the house wall, and the crackling without told him that the bark and binders of the roof were burning fiercely. "Tear it off!" he shouted, and dropping his rifle he seized a length of sawed scantling which his father had brought from the mill, and began to break up the burning roof and cast it off. But as it fell to the ground against the house, soon the logs outside were afire. The dwelling was indeed imperiled.

"Come out! come out!" shouted Simon Halpen's voice. "The hut will burn to the ground an' ye'll burn with it. Ye'll go to Albany jail for this, every last one of ye!"

"Let me shoot him, mother!" cried Bryce, doubly excited now. "He'll never take you to jail."

"Come down from the loft, Bryce," the widow commanded, calmly. "Nothing can save the cabin now."

The children were crying with fear. The red flames began to lick the edges of the shutters and the door frame was afire. If they escaped they must pass through a wall of flame. The men outside, frightened by the result of their awful act, were shouting orders and berating each other madly. Yet none dared come too near, for they feared the guns of the defenders of the homestead. Enoch for the moment completely lost his head and stood as one daft.

But his mother was not so. Swiftly did she sweep aside the ashes on the hearth. Then of her own exertions she lifted on its edge the flat stone which covered the underground apartment. There was the ladder the boys had made leading down into the cool depths. "Down with you—all!" she commanded, seizing little Harry first and thrusting his feet upon the ladder.

"Oh, we'll smother down there, mother!" cried Kate.

"Nonsense!" exclaimed the widow, yet with shaking voice. "Do you think mother would tell you to do anything that would hurt you?"

But though she encouraged them to descend, in her own mind she was simply choosing the lesser of two terrible evils. The girls and Harry descended quickly; but she had to fairly force Bryce down. He wanted to stay and fight, and he clung to the old musket desperately. Although the tears were running down his face, he was made of the stuff which holds the soldier, though frightened, to his post.

"Go down yourself, mother," Enoch said, recovering his presence of mind and speaking calmly now. "I will follow you and drop the stone into place. But first I want to look out ——"

He ran to the loophole, through which the smoke was now pouring. But after a moment there was a break in the cloud and he saw the group of frightened Yorkers plainly. They stood not many rods away and poking his

rifle through the hole, he aimed at the villainous Halpen and, pulling the trigger, ran back to the hearth before the echo of the shot died away. Down the ladder he darted, dropping the heavy hearthstone into place, and leaving the cabin which for so many years had been their home, to be consumed above their heads. But his heart sank when he found how closely the six packed the tiny room and realized how little air reached them down here in the earth.

CHAPTER XII

BACKWOODS JUSTICE

At daybreak on this very morning when the Yorkers attacked the Harding place, 'Siah Bolderwood returning from the direction of Old Ti, suddenly came upon a little glade on the bank of the Walloomscoik Creek. With the instinct long gained by his life as hunter and woodsman, he never crossed an open space in the forest without examining it well. In this glade he saw, at first glance, the signs of recent occupancy. The smouldering ashes of a campfire and the marks on the creek bank told him that a canoe party had camped there during the night and that they had been under way but shortly. Making sure that they were now out of sight he more closely examined the spot. The party numbered at least half a dozen, and there had been two canoes. He had come up the creek bank himself; therefore, not having seen the strangers, they had gone on ahead of him. Five

miles or so up the stream lay the ox-bow at which his old friend Jonas Harding settled when he came into the Disputed Grounds, and where the widow and her brood now lived. After examining the camp he quickened his step toward the Harding place.

A mile further on, however, he heard the stroke of paddles and the sound of men's voices. He would have gone to the fringed river bank and peered out upon the stream had not a figure suddenly risen before him as though from the ground itself and barred his way. "How d'ye, Crow Wing!" he exclaimed, yet showing no surprise at the Indian youth's appearance. The latter bore a brace of rabbits on his gun and Bolderwood guessed that he belonged to the canoe party and had left them to get this game for their dinner.

"Umph!" returned the Indian and looked at him stolidly.

"Your people?" asked the ranger, with a gesture toward the river.

"Umph!" was the reply. It might have meant yes or no. Crow Wing seemed undecided. "Why you no at Hardings?" he demanded finally.

"I'm bound that a-way now," said the white man.

"Hunting?" grunted Crow Wing.

"Been up to Old Ti. Bought some land up there."

Crow Wing seemed about to pass on. But over his shoulder he said: "You go to Hardings' farm. They want you—mebbe."

"What for?"

The Indian shrugged his shoulders and walked on. But Bolderwood strode after him. "What's going on?" he asked, anxiously. "Who's that out yonder?" nodding again toward the creek.

"Umph! Men hire Crow Wing to paddle canoe. They go to Hardings'."

"Yorkers!" exclaimed Bolderwood.

But the Indian youth said no more and quickly disappeared in the bushes which overhung the creek. The ranger hesitated a moment, appeared to think of following him, and then turned abruptly and plunged into the forest on a course diagonal from the river. Therefore, when Nuck and Bryce were fighting the bears in the swamp he did not hear their guns, being by that time some miles

away and striding rapidly toward Arlington. He had suspected the truth and instead of wasting time observing the party of which Crow Wing was a member, he had it in his mind to rouse the neighbors to go to the aid of the widow and her children. After the affair at Otter Creek, which he was sorry indeed to have missed, Bolderwood had expected something like the present raid. He, like the Hardings, believed that Simon Halpen would find the time ripe for the carrying out of his nefarious designs.

It was the season of the year when the farm work having been completed, the pioneers felt free to go about more, and hunting was popular. Many men were off with their rifles; but Bolderwood picked up some half dozen determined fellows and hastened back to the Harding place. While yet some distance away they heard a rifle shot and so disturbed was the ranger by this, that he started on the run for the ox-bow farm, and was far ahead of his friends when he broke cover at the edge of the forest and beheld the cabin.

His horror and despair when he saw the house wrapped in flames and the Yorkers run-

ning across the fields toward the river, knew no bounds. Yet even then he did not suppose that the widow and her family were within the burning dwelling. He presumed they must be hiding in the outbuildings and he ran on after the fleeing Yorkers, thinking only to take vengeance upon them for their wanton cruelty in burning down the poor woman's house at the beginning of winter.

One man kept turning back to look at the blazing structure which was now more than half consumed; and this fellow the ranger quickly overtook. It was the surveyor and he was wringing his hands and weeping as he ran. Bolderwood dashed past him without a word, seeing plainly that he was not armed and was sore frightened. "I'll attend to your case later," the ranger muttered, and spurred on after the rest of the party. But they were too quick for him, and having reached the bank of the creek leaped into their canoes and the Indians pushed off. The fear of what they had done pressed them hard and they had run like madmen from their single pursuer. Now at an order from Halpen the Indians stolidly paddled down the river again and were

quickly out of sight around the nearest bend in the stream.

Bolderwood went back and found the surveyor prone upon the ground and weeping like a woman. "Get up, you great ca'f!" cried the ranger. "Nobody'll kill you for your part in this matter though you desarve little mercy. . . . Was that Simon Halpen?"

"It was indeed—the demon!" gasped the fellow, dragged unceremoniously to his feet by the borderer.

"If he ever comes into this colony again I doubt but he'll be hung as high as Haman," Bolderwood declared. "And you were the surveyor, eh? One of Duane & Kempe's men? Well, sir, your back will be well tickled, or my name's not 'Siah Bolderwood! But bear up, man—'tis no killing punishment."

"What, sir?" cried the fellow. "Do you think I weep because of your promised punishment? I fear you not—I am a leal subject of the King and peaceful. You cannot touch me. But I weep because of the work that dastard has done this day."

"What do you mean?" cried Bolderwood, fiercely. "Where is the woman and her bairns?"

The surveyor pointed a shaking finger at the cabin, the smoking walls of which were now all that were standing. "They are there. Wait! let me tell you. I had nothing to do with the dreadful work. Nor, indeed, did Simon Halpen mean to destroy the house and the poor woman and children. They meant to burn the roof off to scare them out, and one man threw burning clods on it. But those inside tore off the flaming roof and it fell all around the cabin and set the walls afire. They dared not run out through that wall of flame and smothered to death they were—God pity them!" and he began to weep aloud again.

Bolderwood was speechless—well-nigh overcome, indeed, with the horror of this. He saw his friends appear from the wood on the other side of the house and he walked toward them like one in a dream. But still he clung to the surveyor's arm and forced him to approach the cabin. The roof had, of course, been completely consumed, and the outside of

the walls was blackened and still blazed fiercely at the corners. The window shutters and door were burned away and the interior of the place was badly demolished.

"Where's the widder and the boys?" shouted one of the newcomers to Bolderwood. The old ranger did not answer, but his hand tightened upon the surveyor's arm. Suddenly the latter shrieked and would have fallen to the ground had not the grasp upheld him. In the door of the burning cabin stood the figure of Enoch Harding, his face covered with smut and his clothing half burned off his back. For a moment the surveyor believed the dead had risen and he covered his face with his hands to shut out the sight of the boy.

"Are ye all alive, lad?" shouted Bolderwood, dropping the surveyor and running forward.

"We're all right, but well-nigh smothered," returned Enoch, hoarsely. "Bring—bring some water!"

He staggered out of the cabin and fell upon the ground. In a moment the surprised neighbors were running with buckets and pans from the well, for Mistress Harding's

milk vessels had been left to dry outside the springhouse. Bolderwood took it upon himself to revive the half-strangled Enoch, while the others dashed water over the smouldering interior of the cabin, putting out the fire on the floor which was burning briskly, and finally being able to draw the widow and the smaller children from the secret room under the hearth and carry them to the outer air. Here they quickly revived and Mistress Harding with the girls and little Harry took shelter in one of the hovels.

The destruction of the cabin was practically complete. There was not a log that was not charred, and the interior furnishings of the house were ruined. The kind-hearted neighbors saved the chests of bedclothing and the family's best garments, for the flames had not gotten at them. But everything was sadly smoked. And the house would have to be torn down and rebuilded with new timber throughout. It was a sad spectacle indeed for Enoch and Bryce to look upon. "I wish I had shot them all!" cried the latter in a rage. But Enoch said nothing. He would not whisper how his anger had made him aim to

kill Simon Halpen. Now, in cool blood, he was glad that the bullet had not sped true.

But the condition of the house filled him with despair. Winter was at hand and it would be next to impossible to build a good house before spring, although the timbers could be drawn and squared while the snow was on the ground. What would they do for a shelter until then? "We'll make yonder hovel that you boys play in, all tight and warm for the winter, Nuck," Bolderwood observed, seeing the tears running down the boy's cheeks. "Don't cry about it. And we'll have up a better house than this in the spring, lad. The neighbors will all help ye."

Meanwhile, however, Bolderwood had kept his eye upon the surveyor. The latter, seeing that the family had been so miraculously saved from the fire, sought to get away while the men were saving those goods which were unconsumed. But Bolderwood was after him with mighty strides and dragged him back, a prisoner. "Nay, friend, you'll be needed here as a witness," he said, grimly. "We don't allow such gentry as you in the Hampshire Grants without presenting you with a token of

our respect and consideration. Ha!" he added, suddenly, "whom have we here?"

A horseman rode quickly out of the wood and approached the burned cabin. Before he pulled in his steed the men welcomed him vociferously, for it was Captain Baker. "Look at this, 'Member!" cried Bolderwood, dragging the trembling surveyor forward. "What a sight this is to blister the eyes of decent men! A poor widder's house burned about her ears and only by the mercy of God were she and her youngsters saved."

"The villains!" roared Baker. "And is that one of them?"

"He was with the party. But I truly believe that he had little to do with this dastardly work. He's only a poor surveyor body."

"We'll find shelter with some neighbor for Mistress Harding and the little ones," said Baker, "and then attend to his case without delay."

But the widow was not minded to leave her homestead. It was not yet very cold and the hovel in which the children had had their frolic a fortnight before was easily made com-

fortable for the family. She set about this at once while Captain Baker and the neighbors sat in judgment upon the trembling surveyor. These impromptu courts held by the Green Mountain Boys when they happened to capture a Yorker guilty of meddling with the settlers, were in the nature of a court martial. Sometimes the sentences imposed were doubtless unjust, for the judges and juries were naturally bitter against the prisoners ; but the punishment seldom went beyond a sound whipping, and in this case the surveyor, still sputtering and objecting to the illegal procedure, was sentenced to two score lashes, save one, and Enoch and Bryce selected the blue beech wands with which the sentence was to be carried out.

The surveyor was taken behind the log barn, his coat and shirt stripped from his back, and Bolderwood and one of the other neighbors fulfilled the order of Captain Baker as judge of the military court. Bolderwood, remembering the tears the prisoner had shed when he thought the family burned alive, could not be too hard upon him, and although the woodsman made every appearance of

striking tremendous blows, he scarce raised a welt upon the man's back. But when the other executioner laid on for the last nineteen strokes, the surveyor roared with pain and without doubt the lesson was one which did him good. It would be many a day before he ventured to survey the lands east of the Twenty-Mile Line—at least, not until his back stopped smarting. Finally he was given his clothing, and part of the band marched him across country to the New York border and turned him loose.

The attack of Simon Halpen upon the Hardings had practically failed. Yet the loss of their home was a sore blow. In a couple of days, with the help of Bolderwood, the old hovel was made very habitable. But it was small and so many of their possessions had been burned that even Bryce cried about it. Nevertheless their supply of food was all right, and the cattle had not been injured. Also, with Bolderwood's assistance, the three bears which the boys had so happily killed, were brought home, the hams smoked, some of the meat salted, and the pelts stretched and dried for winter bed coverings. By the time

the snow lay deep upon the earth the Hardings were once more comfortable.

The boys did very little trapping and hunting that winter of '72–'73 for they could not attend to traps set very far from the ox-bow, and the Walloomscoik country was becoming scarce of game. 'Siah Bolderwood did not go back to Old Ti, either, but contented himself with making short hunting trips around the lower part of the lake, for he spent all the time he could spare in helping the widow and her boys to get the timber ready for their new abode. Enoch and Bryce were determined that this new structure should be much better than the log cabin which their father had erected ten years before, and every timber dragged to the site by the slow moving oxen was squared with the broad ax and carefully fitted so as to "lock" at the corners. Some planks were sawed at the mill and sledded to the ox-bow on the ice, too, and when the plaintive call of the muckawis—the Indian name for the "whip-poor-will,"—ushered in the spring, a noble company of Green Mountain Boys gathered to build the widow's house again.

Although the new house was put up and made habitable in about ten days, it took some time to fit window-frames, build two partitions, for there were to be two sleeping chambers on the ground floor in this house, which was larger than the old structure, and lay the floor of the loft, build bunks to sleep in, make a new meal chest and dresser, and construct other articles of furniture which were needed to replace the stuff burned in the fire. Enoch had a mechanical turn of mind and Bryce made an able assistant. Between them they turned out a new table, several chairs with hide backs and seats, and even essayed a "rocker" for their mother which, although rudely built and with its rockers not exactly even, was declared by Mrs. Harding to be a marvel of workmanship.

All these things had to be done besides the regular work of the farm during the spring and summer, and the studies of the older boys were rather neglected that year, greatly to the delight of Bryce. Indeed, several of their mother's precious books had been destroyed by the flames, and had it not been for the sorrow he knew she felt at their loss, Bryce

would have openly expressed his satisfaction. He was born for the woods and fields, and although he made no objection to farmwork, it was plain that his father's roving disposition had entered strongly into the make-up of the lad.

He still felt injured—indeed, the feeling grew with his own growth—because he was not allowed to join the military companies; but Mistress Harding had finally promised that if he could trap enough game the next winter to pay for a new gun—a rifle instead of the old musket which had once been Nuck's and which their father had brought with him on his return from the French wars—he should be allowed to attend the Bennington drills. That was putting the privilege a year ahead, but Bryce was partially contented with it.

Lot Breckenridge had finally been allowed to join the Green Mountain Boys and so Enoch had somebody in his company near his own age. On several occasions there were frolics in the neighborhood to which the young people foregathered, and before the new house was builded Lot and Enoch had gone on a very brief hunting trip. But as fall again ap-

proached the two friends, Lot and Enoch, planned to go trapping on the upper waters of the Otter and its branches as soon as harvest and hog-killing should be over and the winter really set in. Lot had several steel traps which had belonged to his father, and Enoch was likewise supplied. Both had canoes, but they agreed to use Enoch's only, as one was all they cared to "pack" over the portage to the upper Otter.

CHAPTER XIII

THE WOLF PACK

MEANTIME throughout the Grants the line between the Whigs and Tories had become more distinct. Although it had been forbidden for any person to hold office or issue writs under advice from New York, in certain sections where the Tory sentiment was strong, New York justices continued to write papers of ejectment against the Hampshire settlers, and other Yorkers were found to serve the documents and on occasion to drive helpless farmers and their families from their homes. These affairs went on openly in the town of Durham, which was a Tory stronghold.

Justice Benjamin Spencer was the principal official who dealt out the New York brand of justice in this town, and he resided in the village of Clarendon. Early in the fall Ethan Allen and a force of Green Mountain Boys, appeared at Clarendon and read to the people the resolutions passed by the Bennington Council to the effect that no person should do

any official act under New York authority, and that all lands should be held under title from New Hampshire. The Durhamites were threatened that, if they refused to comply with these orders within a reasonable time, they would be made to suffer for their temerity. At this visit Judge Spencer absconded, remaining away from home until he was sure "the awful Green Mountain outlaws" had decamped.

Enoch and Lot planned their start into the woods in November, and they were nearly ready when the second raid on Durham was proposed. The boys knew that the matter had been discussed by Colonel Allen and the other leaders for some time, for Justice Spencer still continued to disobey the orders of the Council of Safety, and the matter could not be ignored. It was past the middle of November when the commander of the Green Mountain Boys and some of his followers set out in the direction of Durham, and Lot and Enoch hurried their own going, determined to hide their canoe when once they reached the Otter and join in the descent upon Clarendon village.

It was eleven o'clock at night, November 20th, that Colonel Allen, Captain Baker, and more than a score of their friends, entered the settlement with all the care and circumlocution of Indians. Nuck and Lot Breckenridge had joined the party at supper time in a certain rendezvous of Allen's in the woods, having hidden their canoe and traps on the bank of the Otter several miles away. The attacking force of Green Mountain Boys was heavily armed and might have been bound upon an expedition against Fort Ticonderoga itself, one might imagine. But a show of force was thought to be necessary to overawe the Yorkers who made up more than half the population of the village.

The Green Mountain Boys awakened nobody in their approach to the house of Justice Spencer, until the leader himself thundered at the door and demanded that the New York official come down. After some parley, and seeing that there was no help for his case, Spencer descended and, as the next day was Sunday and nothing could be done then, the prisoner was hidden in the house of Mr. Green, some mile and a half from the settle-

ment, until Monday morning. Early on that day, a still larger force of Grants men having gathered, as well as settlers whose titles had been derived from New York, Justice Spencer was taken to the door of his own house and tried.

The inquest, with Allen, Warner, Baker, and Cochran, sitting in judgment, was carried forward with all due formality, although the judges were the principal accusers of the prisoners, and the sentence was finally pronounced that the prisoner's house be burned and he himself give his bond to not again act as a New York justice. At this the doughty justice broke down, for he plainly saw that his captors were quite able, and in the mind, to carry out the sentence. He told the court that if his house were burned his store of dry goods and all his property would be destroyed and his wife and children made destitute.

"And have you and your like not made many of our friends destitute?" cried some of the crowd. But more showed some heart for the justice, notably Captain Warner. Warner finally suggested that as the dry goods store was a public benefit and was one of the few stores

in the township, it should be saved if possible; and it would be too hard at that time of year to turn the man and his family out of their home. He declared for taking off the roof of the prisoner's house and then putting it on again, providing that Spencer acknowledged that it was put on under a New Hampshire title, and that he would purchase the same at once. Spencer, who might have felt some gratitude by this time, promised compliance in every particular, and with great shouting and good-nature, the roof of the house was lifted off and then put on again. And the lesson to the Durhamites was a salutary one.

Enoch Harding and his chum left immediately after the settlement of the case and returned to their canoe. They feared the approach of a storm which threatened, and were desirous of building their winter camp and getting their traps set before the forest would be full of snow and the streams completely frozen. Both boys were very good woodsmen by this time, for Bolderwood had been Enoch's mentor and Lot's uncle was an old ranger who knew every trick of the forest and trail. They selected a heavily wooded

gulley not far from the Otter and built there a log lean-to against the rocky side-hill, sheltered from the north and open to such sunshine as might penetrate the forest. The traps were set along the bank of the stream, some of them in the water itself, where the boys' sharp eyes told them that the fur-bearing game of which they were in search, were wont to pass.

A fortnight after the Durham riot, as the Yorkers were pleased to call the visit of the Green Mountain Boys, the two friends were very cozily fixed in the gully. One heavy snow had fallen, and their traps had begun to repay their attention most generously. Then the Otter froze over solidly and they had to keep the ice open about their traps with the axe. They were in a lonely piece of wood and day after day saw nor heard nobody but themselves. The bears had taken to their long winter sleep; but the fierce catamount was still abroad, and at night the howling of the wolf-pack as it followed some hard-pressed doe or decrepit buck, reached the boys' ears. And at that day the timber-wolf of the Green Mountains—a long, lean, gray creature as big as a mastiff—was much to be feared.

The traps stretched so far along the creek that if one went out alone to examine and bait them, almost the entire day was consumed. The boys did not possess ice-runners, or skates, with which they might have skimmed over the frozen creek and visited the traps in a couple of hours. Each had brought a pair of snow-shoes, but these were of no use on the creek. So baiting the traps was no easy task. Usually they divided the work between them and thus got it over and had time to stretch and scrape their pelts in the afternoon. One day, however, Lot remained at camp to make some repairs on his clothing, and Enoch set out early to go the rounds by himself.

It had been a very cold night and the ice was frozen solidly about the traps. The catch had been good, too, and both of these facts delayed the young trapper more than common. There were fish lines to examine, also, for some of the traps were baited with fish which was considered particularly tempting food for certain of the beasts they wished to catch. It was long past noon when Enoch got back to the camp for dinner, and then he

had gone over but half the line of traps. When he started in the other direction after hastily eating the meal, he knew he should be out until past moonrise, and told Lot so.

"I'll come and meet you," said his campmate.

"No need. Reckon I can find my way back alone," said Enoch. "The moon'll be up by seven and it's nigh full."

It was so, yet Enoch had no thought when he left the camp that he would be as long delayed as he was. It was full moonrise, before the boy had examined the last trap. He had a goodly load on turning his face campward and was glad of the company of his rifle as he heard the wolves clamoring in the forest. The bitter cold would make them ravenous by now, for many of the more easily caught animals had retired for the winter, while the strong crust on the snow enabled the deer to outdistance their shaggy enemies. While still three miles or more from camp he heard the beasts howling so savagely that he really became alarmed and would have thrown down his pack and run had he not shrunk from so betraying his fear to Lot.

He knew, too, by the nature of the wolves' cries that they were close on the track of some quarry, and that it could not be his trail they were following, for they were approaching the creek through the timber on the western side of the stream. But the sound of the chase drew rapidly nearer, and desperately as Enoch hurried he could not distance the pack. The western bank was high and sloping just here and with anxious eyes the boy looked up the white incline, where the trees stood rather far apart, to catch the first glimpse possible of the wolves and their prey. Suddenly there came into view several dark objects moving swiftly over the snow. One was ahead, flitting from tree to tree, its identity almost indistinguishable at first. Then, with almost a shriek of horror, Enoch recognized the wolves' quarry as a human being!

The pursued was on snow-shoes and coming to a steeper part of the creek bank, at once slid down to the ice. After him, their red tongues hanging to their breasts, and baying at every leap, came a round dozen of the ravenous creatures. Enoch saw that the un-

fortunate man was armed with a gun, but that evidently the weapon had been injured in some way, for he did not make use of it to beat off the wolves. He limped as he ran, too, and the young trapper saw plainly that the pack would overtake and pull him down in a very few moments.

Once upon the ice the beasts spread out and almost surrounded him. While he limped on most awkwardly, the strong, sharp claws of the wolves helped them over the surface and soon the leader—a gaunt, gray monster with cropped ears and scarred back—leaped to seize the prey. Enoch, without a thought of his own danger, had hurried on, re-priming his rifle as he ran ; but he was scarcely within fair gun-shot when the wolf leaped. The beast caught the fugitive by the shoulder, and its weight dragged the man down. He tripped upon his snow-shoes and in an instant was falling face-downward on the ice with the pack of hungry beasts fighting above him !

Enoch fired his rifle into the midst of the pack as he ran, but although one of the wolves rolled over, kicking convulsively upon the ice, the others scarcely noticed the attack.

So eager were they to get at the quarry which they had followed far, that the shot did not frighten them. But the boy was among them in a moment, his gun clubbed, and a fierce desire in his heart to slay the horrid beasts.

He really thought the fallen man was killed, and his attack was inspired wholly by a desire for revenge. He laid about him with the gun-stock in a most furious fashion, and the wolves were soon cleared from above their prostrate victim. His attack quelled the courage of the pack for a little, and even the leader shrank away, howling dolefully. But the respite was not sufficient to allow Enoch to reload his gun.

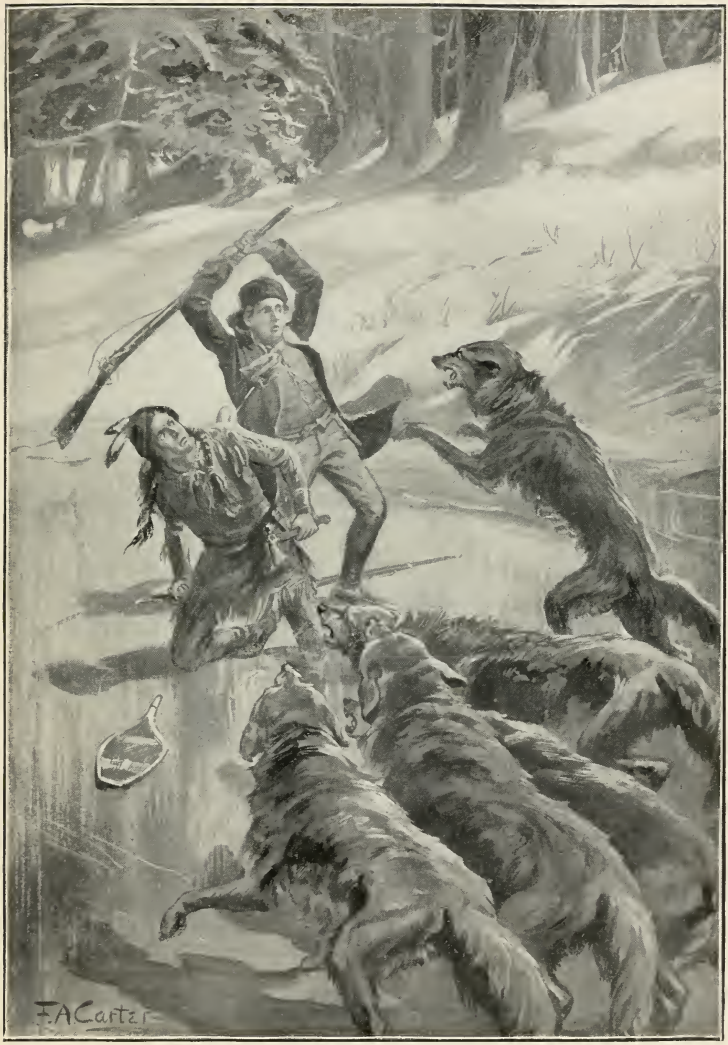
When the brutes fell back, the man upon the ice showed that he was by no means dead, though his exhaustion was plain. He struggled to his knees, and reaching up seized the hunting-knife from Enoch's belt, and the small axe with which the latter had cut the ice away from his traps. With one of these weapons in each hand he crouched in readiness to defend himself when the wolves should renew their attack.

And he had not long to wait, for both

hunger and natural ferocity urged them on. Suddenly the leader, with a savage snarl which fairly turned the blood cold in Enoch's veins, cast itself full at him!

Raised upon his hind legs the old timber-wolf, the hero of a thousand fights with other pack-leaders, or with the young upstarts of his own tribe, was fully as tall as his antagonist. The sight of its wide red jaws, from which the froth flew as it does from the lips of a mad dog, the gleaming yellow teeth, the capacious throat which seemed fairly to steam with the fetid breath expelled from the beast's lungs, almost overcame young Harding. For the moment he was enthralled by the terrifying appearance of the wolf, and his arms lacked the strength necessary to swing his gun.

The charge would surely have overborne him had Enoch not slipped upon the ice as he shrank back, and providentially he fell upon one knee. The wolf had sprung at his throat and the pioneer lad's sinking to the ice caused the beast to leap clear over both the human actors in the drama. But as its lean gray body flashed past, the stranger



THE WOLF SPRANG AT HIS THROAT

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reached up and with Enoch's keen hunting-knife slit a great wound in the exposed body. A wild yell rose above the clamor of the pack and the old wolf rolled over and over on the ice in the agonies of death, the blood spurting from the wound at every pump of its heart.

Instantly half the pack sprang upon the dying leader, every male desiring to be master, and all doubtless bearing upon their own bodies marks of the wounded beast's displeasure. This change of front enabled Enoch to recover both his equilibrium and his presence of mind; and when the other beasts gathered courage to attack him in turn, he was ready to beat them off with his gun and to ably assist his companion in continuing the slaughter. The wolf he had first shot was attacked by its comrades, too, for at the smell and taste of blood the creatures showed all the characteristics of cannibals.

Nevertheless, Enoch and the man crouching at his feet, had all they could do to defend themselves from the charges of the remaining wolves. If the beasts sprang high the boy met them with long-arm swings of his rifle; if they fell short the axe or the knife flashed

and the wolves limped away with savage howls, their blood dyeing the frozen surface of the creek. For yards about the besieged the ice soon had the appearance of a mighty strife and although he had only received a scratch or two himself, Enoch was well spattered with blood.

Hunger and the issue from their own veins drowned the natural cowardice of the canines. They charged blindly, and as fast as one went down beneath the blows of Enoch's gun, or was seriously wounded by his companion, another wolf sprang to the attack. Three already lay dead on the ice, torn limb from limb by their comrades, and three others limped upon the outer edge of the circle, seriously wounded; but still the fierce brutes sprang at their prey, and sprang again!

Involuntarily Enoch shouted aloud at every blow he struck, but his companion maintained a desperate silence. The boy did not cry out because he expected any aid; yet assistance was within call. A figure came running over the ice from up stream and the sharp crack of a rifle announced the approach of Lot Breckenridge, who had come out to meet his

friend. Another wolf rolled over in the throes of death, to be seized by its companions and torn to pieces with horrid cries. Lot came on with shouts of encouragement and together with Enoch laid about him with clubbed rifle until the remaining wolves, their cries now turned to yelps of fear, stampeded from the scene of the battle and sought safety in the forest, from the edge of which they howled their disappointment at their antagonists.

It was Lot who first regained his breath and spoke. "Zuckers! but that was a great fight," he cried, hugging Enoch in his joy at finding him practically unhurt. "But you look as though you had been killin' beeves, Nuck. And who's this with you?" The individual in question rose stiffly to his feet with a significant "Umph!" "Why!" exclaimed Lot, "it's an Injin—it's Crow Wing! Where'd you pick him up, Nuck?"

Enoch was vastly astonished to see whom he had befriended. "I had no idea who it was," he said. "How came you in this country, Crow Wing?"

The Indian, now grown to be a tall and

magnificent looking warrior, was breathing heavily and had some difficulty in answering for a moment. He stood, too, on one foot, holding up his left one like a lamed stork. "Umph!" he grunted at last. "White boys in good time. Save Injin sure!" He gravely offered his hand first to Enoch and then to Lot. "Crow Wing lame. Hurt foot—break gun—wolves come howl, howl, howl! No can scare 'em; no can make fire; no can run good. Umph!"

"You'll have to go to our camp," said Enoch. "You can't travel on that foot. You've sprained or broken it."

Crow Wing nodded. He made no sign that the foot hurt him, excepting by holding it off the ice. "Some wolf pelts good," he remarked, sententiously.

Lot had already turned away to examine the dead beasts. Only two skins were fit to be stripped from the carcasses and added to the pelts Enoch had brought from the traps. The two white boys quickly obtained these and then, with the Indian hobbling between them, and leaning on their shoulders, the trio made their way to camp

through the moonlight, while the remaining wolves slunk back to the scene of the battle and devoured their dead comrades.

CHAPTER XIV

THE TESTIMONY OF CROW WING

The natures of the white man and the red are so opposed that it was impossible from the beginning of our North American history that either should really understand the sentiments and desires of the other. In the eyes of the Indian the most stoical and repressive white man was little better than a garrulous old woman. The "Yenghese," as the Indians called the English, were less criticised on this point than were the French; but the latter, being an imitative race, more easily adapted themselves to the manner and life of the red man, and therefore won his confidence if not his respect.

Crow Wing displayed neither astonishment at finding the two white boys here, nor pain at the serious accident which had overtaken him. And it would have been a waste of time to urge him to explain more fully his being in this neighborhood. When he was

ready to speak he would do so, and long after Lot Breckenridge was asleep, rolled up in his blanket and with his feet to the fire which blazed at the opening of the hut, did Enoch wait for the story. Crow Wing waited until he had slowly smoked out the little brass-bowled pipe which he carried with tobacco in a pouch at his belt. This pouch of tobacco and another of parched Indian corn, were all the provisions the ordinary Indian carried when on the march. The forest must supply his larder from time to time as he had need; and if game was scarce the red man went uncomplainingly with empty stomach.

"Harding and Lot found much pelt?" he said, questioningly, waving his hand at the bales of furs in the back of the shelter.

"So-so. We can't complain, Crow Wing. You were trapping, too?"

"Yonder," replied the Indian, pointing to the west. "Crow Wing look at trap; wolves met him; wolves very hungry; make much mad when hungry. Umph!"

"And they attacked you right away?"

"Umph! Me shoot; then club gun. Hit tree first time; break gun; then run some

more. Catch foot and fall; much hurt. That all."

"Are you alone at your camp yonder?"

"Umph!" said the Indian, nodding affirmatively.

"You had better stay here till your foot's well. I reckon that gun can be repaired, too. Only the stock is broken."

The Indian's eyes gleamed, showing that this statement pleased him vastly. Crow Wing's "fire-tube" was his most precious possession. "Me thought no good," he said.

"I know of a man in Bennington who can fix it," declared Enoch. "Have you many pelts at your camp?"

On his fingers Crow Wing showed how many beaver skins, otter pelts, wolf hides, and other and less worthy furs, he had obtained. He also stated that he had three steel wolf traps and two beaver or otter traps which he had obtained from a farmer for whom he had worked.

"We can bring 'em all over here. Lot and I will go for them. You can't get around on that foot much for several weeks. It's bad. You 'tend camp and stretch pelts, while Lot

and I look out for the traps. Then, when we go home, you take one third of the pelts."

Crow Wing thought of this silently for a moment and then held out his hand with gravity. "Good! Crow Wing go to Bennington with Harding and Lot; sell pelts there and get gun fixed. Umph!"

Although Enoch had suggested this scheme upon his own responsibility he knew Lot would agree to it. Really, it was a good thing for all three. Crow Wing's gun was useless, and his lame foot made traveling next to impossible for a while. But he could keep camp all right and look after the pelts. The traps the Indian had would be of much service to the white boys and would increase their own gains not a little. So upon this amicable basis the Indian joined the party and the next day Lot and Enoch, directed by Crow Wing, traveled to the Indian's camp and packed back both the traps and the skins.

The boys learned that Crow Wing's people now resided in New York colony, on the shores of Lake George, and that the young warrior had not been east of the Twenty-Mile Line since the raid of Simon Halpen upon the

Widow Harding's cabin. By patient questioning Enoch learned that Halpen had lived for months at a time with the tribe, but that he was not an adopted member of it, and was not altogether trusted by Crow Wing's people.

"When burn cabin, old chief—my father—be told. Injins friends with Bennin'ton men; friends with York men, too. But Hawknose," the Indian's sobriquet for Simon Halpen, "sent away. He never come back."

"You have hunted with him?" said Enoch, with some eagerness. "You were with him that day—you know—long ago; the day the Yorkers came up to James Breckenridge's farm?"

Crow Wing made no reply for some time, gazing with gloomy eyes into the fire. Finally he said, speaking in an oracular manner, yet brokenly as he always did, for the English tongue was hard to him: "Jonas Harding not friend to Injin; Injin not friend to him. You friend to Crow Wing. You fight Crow Wing; fight 'um fair; when foot well we fight once more? Umph!"

Enoch laughed. "I'll wrastle you any

time you like, Crow Wing. But you can beat me running."

The Indian, undisturbed, went on: "You not like father; you not speak Injin like he be slave-man; Injin free!" and he said it proudly, for the redskins looked down upon the negroes because they were the slaves of the colonists. "Hawknose no like Jonas Harding; he own your land; he buy it from Great Father of York and he buy it from Injin. All land Injin's once," he added, with a cloud upon his face. "Injin come with Hawknose to measure land; white man bring little thing to measure it; Jonas Harding throw Hawknose in creek and more white men beat him. White man, like Injin, feel he squaw when beat. Hawknose mad; tell Injin he kill Jonas Harding; drive you from land."

"But father was killed by a buck in the forest," said Enoch, carefully hiding the emotion he felt.

"Umph!" grunted Crow Wing, and would say nothing further at the time.

Lot, although he had been often a companion of the Indian when the latter lived near

his uncle's farm, looked upon him just as he did upon Sambo, Breckenridge's slave boy. He had played with him, swam with him, learned to use the bow and arrow under Crow Wing's instruction, and had gained something of forest lore from the Indian youth; but he had no respect for him, or for his peculiarities. He had not learned at 'Siah Bolderwood's knee of the really admirable qualities of these people whom the whites were pleased to call "savages." Lot made no objection to Crow Wing's joining them, for his presence, and the use of his traps, was a very good thing for them. He patronized the Indian, however, and was not above suggesting that, as the redman was so ignorant, it would not really be necessary to divide the pelts in even thirds at the end of the season.

"The trader won't give him but about so much for them, anyway, no matter how many he offers," he said to Enoch. "You know how it is with them. Injins can't count and the traders fool 'em and cheat 'em. We'd better take some of his ourselves and so get some good out of them."

"That isn't honest, Lot!" cried Enoch, hotly.

"Huh! it's honest enough. We won't be cheating the Injin, for they'll do him no good. And there's no use in the traders makin' so much on him."

"Then we'll go with him and see that the traders treat him honestly," declared young Harding.

"Zuckers!" exclaimed the careless Lot. "Catch me putting myself out that way for a redskin."

"You're glad enough to use his traps, Lot!" cried Enoch. And the two old friends came very near having a falling out over the matter. Lot simply followed the example of the older settlers whom he knew. It was no particular sin to cheat an Indian. They were too much like children to look out for themselves in a bargain, anyway.

But as week followed week, Crow Wing's manner toward Enoch Harding showed that he had adopted him, Indian fashion, as "brother." Not that the red youth displayed any affection; that was beneath a brave. But he appreciated Enoch's respectful treatment of

him. Crow Wing treasured this in his mind and, when the spring came, and they packed their bales of furs by canoe and hand-sled to Bennington, and Enoch took pains to make the traders pay the Indian quite as liberally as they did Lot and himself for his furs, his gratitude blossomed in its fulness.

Lot went home to see his mother; but Enoch took Crow Wing to the Harding house with him and gave him an old canoe in which the red youth could make his way by water and portage to his home on the shores of Lake George. Crow Wing did not go near the house when Enoch met his mother and the younger Hardings after his long absence; but he sat down to dinner with them and if he used his fingers oftener than his hunting knife to prepare his food it was not remarked, for forks were not always used by the settlers themselves at that day. His gravity awed the younger children, while Bryce admired his proportions openly. The Indian youth was certainly a magnificently built fellow.

Before he went away he sat beside the creek and silently smoked a farewell pipe while his white friend waited for his last words. Enoch

believed Crow Wing had something to tell him regarding Simon Halpen and that the time for speech had come; but knowing his nature the white youth had not tried to hurry this confidence.

"Hawknose come here once more—what you do?" Crow Wing asked, when the pipe was finished.

"Simon Halpen is my enemy. If you have an enemy what do you do?" returned Enoch, with some emotion.

The Indian nodded. "Hawknose, Jonas Harding's enemy. No deer kill Jonas Harding. Hawknose yonder then," and he waved his hand toward the deer-lick at which the dead settler had been found three years before.

"How does Crow Wing know that?" queried the white boy, eagerly.

"Crow Wing there, too."

"You saw him ——" began Enoch, but the Indian cut him short with an emphatic "Umph! No see. Hear shot. Shot kill doe. Jonas Harding kill doe. Gun empty."

"Yes, we found the gun and the dead doe. And there were marks of a big buck all about the place and father—was dead."

"Hawknose there," said the Indian, gravely. "Crow Wing see him—running. Pass him—so," with a gesture which led Enoch to believe that the running Halpen had crossed the Indian's path within a few feet. "He no see Crow Wing. He run fast—look back over shoulder. And blood—blood on shirt—blood on hands—blood on gun! Go wash 'em in river. Then run more."

"You saw him running away from the lick?" gasped Enoch. "But there were no footprints but father's near the place. Only the hoof prints of the big buck."

"Umph! Crow Wing no see big deer; no hear 'um. But see Hawknose run," said the Indian significantly.

"But I can't understand how Halpen could have killed him, Crow Wing. He did not shoot him, and if he had been near enough to strike father down, why did his moccasins leave no mark?"

The Indian rose gravely. "Some time we see. Crow Wing come back here. Harding go with him to deer-lick. Look, look—find out, mebbe."

"But after three years how can any-

thing be found?" demanded Enoch, in despair.

"Will see," returned Crow Wing, and, without further word, entered the canoe and pushed out into the river. Nor did he turn about to look at the white youth once while the canoe was in sight. But he left Enoch Harding stirred to his depths by the brief and significant conversation. The youth did not understand how Simon Halpen could have compassed his father's death; yet Crow Wing evidently suspected something which he had not seen fit to divulge.

CHAPTER XV

THE STORM CLOUD GATHERS

Enoch scarce knew Bryce after his winter's absence. The younger boy had felt the responsibility of his position as head of the family pro tem and although he had lost none of his cheeriness and love of action, he had gained some cautiousness. His care for little Henry and the girls was delightful and Mrs. Harding was undoubtedly proud of him. Although kept at home almost continually by his duties, Bryce had been able to trap enough beavers to buy the rifle which he had long wanted and on the first training day after the roads dried up in the spring, he went with Enoch to Bennington and was enrolled in Captain Baker's company.

And during this year of '74 the train bands became of more importance than ever before. While in Boston and in other cities of the colonies, meetings were held in secret and companies of minute men were drilled by

stealth, here in the Grants the Whigs trained openly, and the reason for it was known, too. The course of the foolish King and his ministers was widening the breach between the mother country and the American colonies until, when the Continental Congress met on September 5th of this year, royal authority was suspended almost everywhere but in the New York Colony. Within its confines were the strongest and most influential Tories, while the Dutch, who made up a goodly share of the population, although becoming good patriots in the end and warmly supporting the struggling nation which was born of that Congress, were phlegmatic of nature and slow to rouse.

During these months so pregnant with coming trouble, the controversy between the land jobbers and the Grants waned but little. The Yorkers had received so many sharp lessons, however, that they were careful to attack no settlers who were within reach of assistance from any body of Green Mountain Boys. And as Allen, Warner, and Cochran had many "hide-outs" in the hills, where they kept munitions of war and to which they sum-

moned their followers by means which actually seemed to savor of the Black Art to their enemies, it was difficult for the Yorkers to know where it was really safe to carry on their attacks against the peaceful grantees. Being " viewed " became a most serious matter indeed, and many a luckless surveyor or other underling of the sheriff of Albany, carried the blue-seal of the Green Mountain Boys upon his person for months after an unexpected meeting with those rangers of the forest.

But the Yorkers kept away from Benningford and the surrounding district. More farms had been taken up there by Hampshire grantees than in other parts of the disputed ground and the reign of the Green Mountain Boys was supreme. The Hardings had been very happy since the building of the new house, and, as there had been a school established in the vicinity, the girls and Harry attended for six months in the year. Kate had grown to be a tall girl and looked like her mother, while Mary and Harry were becoming of considerable use outside of, as well as in, the house.

Enoch and Bryce cleared a piece of woodland that year and late in the fall there was another stump-burning. 'Siah Bolderwood came down from his "farm" near Old Ti to join in the festivities; but several of the young people who had attended the stump-burning three years before were not present. Robbie Baker was up north with his father, and Lot Breckenridge had moved away from the vicinity of Bennington; Crow Wing did not come to try his skill at wrestling with Enoch, so the latter sat by with 'Siah as one of the judges, for he was older than the other contestants. Lot's mother had married a man named Lewis who owned and worked a farm much nearer the Connecticut River, in the town of Westminster, and after his return from their winter's trapping the spring before, Lot had gone across the mountains to work for his stepfather.

Lot had always been his dearest friend and Enoch missed him sorely, and as he could not go trapping with him this winter, he agreed to visit Westminster for a fortnight or so, some time during the idle months. It was March when he started to cross the range and

although the roads were still full of snow, he went horseback. A sleigh was a luxury that few Bennington people owned, although Nuck might have hitched the old wood-sled to Dobbin. He spent one night at a farmer's on the road, and was welcomed at supper time the next evening at the Lewis house.

"Zuckers!" exclaimed Lot, running out to drag his friend off his horse, "I tell ye, I'm glad to see ye! And so'll marm be—if the young uns don't bother her too much. There's three Lewis young uns, too, besides the baby, and I tell ye, they're a wild lot. I'd raythor tackle them wolves that you'n Crow Wing got mixed up with last winter. Seen the Injin since?"

"Not since I sent him home with more money than he had ever seen before in his life," replied Enoch.

"Very foolish of you! We might have had some of his pelts just as well's not."

"You don't mean that, Lot," said Enoch, who knew that young Breckenridge talked a deal more recklessly than he really felt.

"Well, never mind all that," said Lot. "Tell me the news. What's goin' on 'tother

side the mountings? Did ye know that lots more red-coats had come to Boston? And they say—leastways, a pedlar that come through here told us so last week—that the Boston folks have got a lot of guns and ammunition stored in the country towns and the minute men are drilling day and night. Do you s'pose there'll be war there, Nuck?"

"If the Massachusetts people feel like we do here in the Grants, there'll be fighting," said Enoch, his eyes flashing. "What d'you suppose would happen if troops were quartered on us?"

"I'm goin' to Boston if there's a fight," declared his friend. "Mr. Lewis says I can. He's a nice man—marm's second husband—and he's strong for the Grants, too. He's got a Hampshire title. But there's lots of Tories around here. The court's goin' to sit next week an' there'll be trouble then, mark my word. Lots of the cases these Tories have hatched up against our people are goin' to be tried, an' the Whigs ain't goin' to stand it. Judge Chandler ain't so bad a man; but Judge Sabin and the others are dead set ag'in all our folks. They say the sheriff has sworn

in a big lot of deperties. Mebbe you'll see some fun before you go back to Bennington, Nuck."

As Lot's idea of "fun" was pretty sure to be a scrimmage of some kind, it can be easily seen how strained the relations were then between the Whigs and the Tory court of the district. Whereas Tories and Whigs had lived at peace before, now they became bitter in controversy and even families were divided upon the questions of the hour.

Enoch found Lot's stepfather to be a very quiet, pleasant man, who made it a point to be at harmony with all his neighbors, yet whose personal feelings and opinions as a Whig were well known. Lot delighted in being where the older men of the community discussed the trend of public affairs and it was due to him that Enoch, the second night after his arrival, gained some little notoriety in Westminster by an encounter he had at the Royal Inn, kept by one John Norton.

The tap-room and parlors of the inn were occupied every evening at this time by the men of Westminster, and by certain visitors who had, for some days, been gathering for

the meeting of the General Court. And all these visitors were not attorneys, or plaintiffs and defendants in the several cases which would come up for hearing before their Worships the justices. The sheriff was already at Westminster and there were more armed men about the town than had ever been seen there before at one time. Until the closing hour earnest discussions were carried on in the inn, for although the Royal, or "Norton's house" as it was called, was the headquarters of the Tories, many Whigs frequented it, too. Naturally, the young men and half-grown boys wished to listen on the outskirts of these groups, and Lot Breckenridge was desirous of hearing all that went on. Enoch went with him to the inn rather against his will. Mistress Harding did not approve of such places for youths and Enoch had not grown so old or so big as to wish to disobey his mother, or even to believe that she was less able to guide him than she had formerly been.

The inn was well filled, indeed, that night and Master Norton was bustling about from group to group, dropping a word here and another there, determined to keep all his

guests pleased as maybe; for despite his Tory principles, the innkeeper was first for his own pocket and would not antagonize any man knowingly. Mine Host was particularly attentive to a party of ten or a dozen gentlemen who, having eaten, now sat grouped before one of the fires engaged in earnest, and somewhat noisy, conversation. The figure of the sheriff was the centre of this group.

Lot and Enoch stood with other young men within ear-shot and heard many remarks which plainly showed the affiliation of the sheriff and his friends to the Tory cause; and the party had dined so well that they were not particularly careful to modulate their voices so that others in the vicinity who might be of a different mind, should not overhear them. The sheriff was a pompous man who, when he spoke, commanded the attention of all about him. The dignity of his office rode him hard and his companions deferred to him almost servilely, for at that day such an officer was held in great reverence, especially by the King's adherents.

"These malcontents who would question the right of the King to govern them, should

be punished, every man Jack of them!" the sheriff declared, looking about fiercely at his auditors. "I care not who they are, nor how high they stand. That Dr. Warren and Mr. Otis of Boston are gentlemen of education and position I grant ye; but they should feel the heavy hand of the law nevertheless—yes, sir! And some of these fellows who have gone to Philadelphia and are making such a rumpus there—they should be taught their place!"

"That they should, Master Sheriff!" cried one of his supporters.

"The King's men treated that Otis just right some months back," growled another—a man who sat back in the shadow of the high mantel and wore a cloak, the high collar of which half muffled his face. At the speech of this one Enoch, who had been dragging at the sleeve of his companion to get him away, ceased this and pushed forward himself. Something in the tone of the last speaker's voice had attracted his attention and he strove to see his features.

"They should be whipped—every man Jack of them!" cried the sheriff, repeating his favorite expression.

"Better let Ethan Allen and his boys beech-seal them, eh, Sir Sheriff?" cried some Whig on the outskirts of the group, and a laugh was raised among those of like feeling.

"We shall settle that villain Allen—we shall settle him, sir!" declared the sheriff, angrily. "The Honorable Court will punish these fellows who retain their lands without proper authority from the King and our Governor. There will be an overturn in these Grants ere long—mark my word, sir!"

"The dogs should be driven back to Massachusetts and Connecticut—where they came from," growled the man with the cloak.

"That's true!" exclaimed several of the group.

"Aye, and the time approaches when it may be done," cried the sheriff.

"But what think you Ethan Allen, Seth Warner, 'Member, and the rest of the boys will be doing, Sir Sheriff?" demanded the same Whig who had before spoken.

"They'll be clapped into Albany jail—that's what will become of them!" declared the sheriff.

"And a right good place for them," said he

of the cloak. Enoch was still maneuvring to get a sight of this man, but the shadow of the high mantel was cast across his face. All the boy could see was the gleam of his eyes as he turned with an angry gesture toward the audience. "The boldness of these outlaws is astonishing."

"That Allen appears to have many followers," suggested a mild mannered man beside the sheriff.

"He is a bully; they fear him!" declared the former speaker, vigorously.

"How is that, John Norton?" cried the Whig, who evidently was a bold man to so flout the sheriff and his friends. "You know Colonel Allen personally. Should you call him a bully and say that he governs men by fear?"

"Not I!" exclaimed the innkeeper. "And saving your presence, sheriff, it would be a man of some stomach who would dare say that to Ethan Allen's face. As for these same Green Mountain Boys, it is not fear that keeps them together."

"I tell you they are a set of masterless villains!" cried the dark man, turning angrily

about so that at last the collar of his cloak fell back. "They should be driven out of the colony and their houses burned to the ground ——"

Suddenly he stopped. His harsh voice died to a whisper and his astonished companions looked at him in amazement. For a moment he seemed to have been frozen in his chair, and their eyes following his glance fell upon the white and angry face of Enoch Harding who had pushed through the ring of listeners. "And it is you who would set the torch to their homes!" exclaimed the youth, his voice shaking. "You already have one count of the kind against you, and if you ever come to Bennington again there'll be more than a beech-sealing awaiting you—you villain!"

Some of the crew sprang up in astonishment, and some in anger. "Who is that bold rascal, landlord?" demanded the sheriff. "Bring him here."

But Lot had fairly dragged the angry Enoch to the door and now pushed him out of the inn. "What's the matter with you, Nuck?" he demanded. "D'you want to get us all into trouble?"

"That's Simon Halpen!" exclaimed Enoch, panting with excitement. "I'd have flown at his throat in another moment."

"Zuckers!" exclaimed Lot. "The feller that burned down your marm's house? Don't blame ye for bein' mad. But ye don't wanter stir up a fuss here. Our game is ter lay low and let the Tories start the row if they're minded to. You'll see. Mr. Lewis an' some others is goin' to see the judges to-morrow an' try to keep the court from sittin'. They'll sure be trouble if the Tories bring our people before the court. We can't git no fair trial, so we won't be tried at all."

Enoch was very silent on the way back to Lot's house. The shock of seeing Simon Halpen again after all this time, had stirred the youth greatly. Despite the fact that the villain was so far away from the Walloomscoik, and would probably not dare go near Bennington, Enoch could not help feeling troubled by the circumstance of his presence within the borders of the Grants. And he was glad that 'Siah Bolderwood had promised to remain at or near the Hardings' home while he, Enoch, was at Westminster.

Under Lot's advice the two boys said nothing of the little scene at the inn and the next morning Mr. Lewis went with other stable men of the town to call upon the justices who would preside at the court when it met. The feeling between Whigs and Tories was so strong that all peace-loving men feared bloodshed. At the first blow a terrible civil war might begin—a war in which neighbor would engage with neighbor and the community be utterly ruined. And if the court sat and tried the cases against those settlers who refused to purchase New York titles to their lands, or to leave their homes at the order of the sheriff and his deputies, the battle would begin. Nobody could doubt that.

Despite the fact that the offices were held by the Tories, the Whigs were greatly in the majority. And this majority declared the will of the people should be upheld, and that will was that no court should sit until matters quieted down and the heat had gone out of the political veins of the community. They presented this matter strongly to the judges and warned them of what might be expected if the court undertook to sit at Westminster.

Although staunch Tories, the judges were impressed by what was told them by the committee; Justice Chandler, indeed, gave his word that nothing should be done toward convening the court until time had been given the people to cool down. It was promised, too, that the sheriff and his men should not be given a free hand in the town.

With these assurances from Judge Chandler the committee of Whigs returned. To make sure that the sheriff, who with his men were spending every day and night at the Royal Inn, did not seize the court-house in defiance of the people's will, the Whigs sent a guard to that building on the evening of the 13th—the day before that set for the convening of the court. This guard, however, was armed only with clubs, and was set to keep the troublesome factions of both parties in order, and was recruited from among the better affected families of the town. Lot Breckenridge and Enoch were allowed by Mr. Lewis to join these volunteers.

CHAPTER XVI

THE WESTMINSTER MASSACRE

What March 5, 1770, had been to the people of Boston and the Colony of Massachusetts, March 14, 1775, was destined to become to the patriot citizens of Vermont. That date reminds them to-day of the first blood shed in the great struggle within the borders of the Grants—the first pitched battle between American yeomanry and the minions of a cruel and tyrannical king. Before the martyrs were shot down at Lexington was the Westminster Massacre—an incident which set the torch to the passions of the Whigs throughout the Grants.

Despite the efforts of Judge Chandler, who really was honestly bent on peace, the associate Judge Sabin and the fire-eating sheriff brought about that clash of arms, the stain of which was to be wiped out by nearly eight years of bitter war. The Tory officials and their henchmen gathered about the courthouse when it was known that the Whigs had

seized it, and threatened an attack early in the evening of the 13th; but apparently willing to abide by the decision of the chief justice, they dispersed after that worthy had promised the Whigs that nothing should be done to oust them from the premises until the following day. Chandler doubtless went to his repose, believing that his partisans would uphold him in his promise.

But the sheriff had other views. He had gathered a noble army at John Norton's inn. There were no Whigs there that night. They sought other houses of entertainment, or their own homes, for their leaders had counseled moderation. But the wily sheriff finally gave his orders, and those orders were inspired by Judge Sabin and other rank Tories. Separating as they issued from the inn into three bodies, the sheriff's men approached the guarded court-house from as many directions and were thundering at the doors before the Whigs were aware that such treachery was intended. There was not a fire-arm in the court-house, but when called upon to surrender the guard refused and strove to barricade the entrance.

Although the young men had expected nothing like this, they had not taken their duty lightly. They were of the best Whig families of the neighborhood and had not accepted the responsibility as a lark. Enoch became acquainted with one of his companions early in the evening who, because of his open face, free and gentle manner, and earnest conversation impressed the Bennington boy as being a youth of better parts than were most of the backwoods people. Lot told his guest that this individual was William French, the son of a Mr. Nathaniel French, a man well known and respected highly by his neighbors. Like Lot, young French was deeply interested in the affairs of the colonies, especially in what was occurring in and about Boston. He had planned to go to the Massachusetts colony and offer his services to the Committee of Safety there if war really became imminent, though he would go, Enoch saw, in a much different spirit from Lot's. Lot was eager for a fight for the fight's sake; but French realized the root of the trouble and espoused the cause of the persecuted colonists from principle.

It was eleven o'clock at night when the sheriff and his men attacked the Whig guards, and many of the latter were asleep. The uproar was great as the besieged tried to keep the Tories out of the building; but the latter were reckless and knew that they had to do with a practically helpless enemy. They forced an entrance, though the Whigs rallied well and delivered some telling blows with their clubs. These blows doubtless had much to do with what followed, for the sheriff's men became greatly incensed. All the lights in the house were put out and for several moments the antagonists fought in the dark. Enoch was not behind in the battle and was one of those in the front rank which strove to beat the sheriff's men back to the door. William French fought next him, while he could hear his friend Lot shouting encouragement not far away.

The Tories were under a disadvantage in the dark and some of those still without ran with torches and thrust them in, that the battleground might be illumined. At that the sheriff, spurred by rage and the smart of a blow he had received, cried to his men:

"Fire! Fire at the rascals who defy the law's authority!"

Some of his men took him at his word and putting their pieces to their shoulders, they had been using them as clubs, shot blank-point into the group of opposing Whigs!

It was a terrible scene that followed. Several men fell about Enoch, and groans and cries rose from the wounded. A bullet had sent Enoch's cap spinning into the air, but he did not notice that. Young William French had fallen beside him and the Bennington boy stooped and caught the young man's head and shoulders from the floor that he might not be trampled upon.

Shouts and imprecations deafened him. The Whigs still fought, but some had already tried to escape by a side passage and were being brought back by the sheriff's men. That wicked man was calling upon the Whigs to surrender, and more than one shot was fired after that first volley.

Enoch, with the head of the bleeding youth in his arms, cried to those about him to move aside and bring a light. All were too much inflamed by passion to heed him for a time;

but suddenly one man sprang forward and thrust a huge, brass-locked pistol into his own face. The boy was frightened, and strove to throw himself backward out of range; but the pistol snapped!

Providentially the weapon was either unloaded, or the powder was damp. Otherwise that moment would have ended Enoch Harding's earthly career. And in the flash of torchlight which was an instant later cast upon the scene, the startled boy recognized the dark features and hawk nose of Simon Halpen. The villain had sought him out and had striven to pay off old scores in that moment of confusion and uproar.

But the confusion helped Enoch to escape, too. Lot seized his shoulder and dragged him up from his knees. "Let him alone, poor chap!" he whispered hoarsely in his friend's ear, and Enoch saw that he was crying, "Let him alone. He is dead. Oh, these villains shall be punished for this—they shall be punished! War has begun, Nuck—and we have seen its beginning!" In his horror and despair Lot Breckenridge was prophetic. War had begun; the first blood of the revolu-

tion—antedating in its sacrifice the Battle of Lexington—had been shed.

Indeed, Lot and Enoch were fortunate to escape from the building, for ten of the Whigs had been wounded beside poor French, and seven of the remaining were taken prisoner. The town was roused and a great concourse of people gathered in the streets. The sheriff and his men were loudly execrated, and even some of the Tories expressed their indignation. The men who had done the deed were forced to remain under cover for the rest of the night while the alarm went into all the countryside and by daybreak the patriot farmers were pouring into Westminster—a horde of indignant citizens before whom the Tory officials trembled.

The very judges themselves were taken into custody and had not the better counsel of the staid and solid men prevailed, the sheriff and those who aided him might have been hung to a gibbet erected in the court-house yard. On the fifteenth Captain Cochran and forty Green Mountain Boys, who had been apprised of the terrible affair, marched over the mountain to arraign themselves upon the

side of the Whigs if the matter should come to real warfare. But fortunately further bloodshed was averted, and never again did a Tory judiciary hold court in Eastern Vermont.

Enoch went back to Bennington with some of Robert Cochran's company. News of the Westminster affair had preceded him and the Catamount Inn was thronged with earnest men discussing the matter and various other news-packets which had lately come from other colonies. War with the mother country seemed inevitable and Ethan Allen and men of his stamp looked forward to it not without some eagerness. It was not that they were reckless and irresponsible, or did not understand the terrible situation in which the colonies might find themselves should the mother country send across the sea a great army. But in the coming struggle they beheld the salvation of their own people and of the Hampshire Grants.

Therefore, perhaps even previous to this time, immediately following the Westminster Massacre, these leaders had earnestly discussed the possibilities of war and what the Green

Mountain Boys could do to further the cause of the colonies. On the shores of the beautiful lake which was the colonists' boast, were two of the strongest fortresses—or two which had been and could be made again the strongest—of the New World, Ticonderoga and Crown Point. At Old Ti were many stores and munitions of war and the place was held by a comparatively small guard of red-coats who had a great contempt for, and therefore small appreciation of, the valor of the colonials.

With these circumstances in mind Old Ti was already an object of the conferences of Vermont's leading men. Possessing that fortress, Crown Point, and Skenesboro, the lake would be free of British and the way to Canada open; and at that early date it was strongly believed by the patriots that the French descendants of the early settlers of Canada would join the Colonies in their fight for freedom.

Young Enoch Harding did not see the leaders as he passed through Bennington; but he was waylaid there a dozen times, and upon his road home, to satisfy the curiosity and interest of his neighbors in the Westminster

trouble. Letters from Boston had roused them to the highest pitch, too. Nor were his mother and Bryce any less anxious to hear and discuss the news. Mistress Harding had lived within a few miles of Boston and felt a deep interest still in the people and the affairs of the Massachusetts Colony. That a foreign soldiery should have been landed on her shores fired even this good and gentle woman with anger, and when Bryce said he'd go to Boston, too, along with Lot Breckenridge, if there was war, she did not say him nay.

But the Hardings had little time to waste upon politics. The boys had to drop the drilling soon, too, for it came ploughing and seed time. 'Siah Bolderwood remained about the settlement rather later than usual that year, and mainly for the reason that public affairs were so strained. He said his own crop of corn which he intended putting into the lot near Old Ti upon which he "had let the light of day" could wait a bit, under the circumstances, for there might be occasion to "beat his ploughshare into a sword" before corn-planting time.

Therefore he was still with the Hardings

that day late in April when Ethan Allen, riding out of Bennington into the north to carry a torch which should fire every farm and hamlet with patriotic fervor, reined in his steed at the door of the farmhouse. The children saw the great man coming and ran from the fields with Bolderwood, while the widow appeared at her door and welcomed Colonel Allen.

"Will you 'light, sir?" she asked him. "It has been long since you favored us with a visit."

"And long will it be ere I come again, perhaps, Mistress Harding. I am like Sampson—I have taken an oath. And mine is not to rest, nor to give this critter rest, until I have spoken to as many true men in these Grants as may be seen in a week. The time has come to act!"

"Reckon I'd better be joggin' erlong toward Old Ti, heh, Colonel?" remarked the ranger, leaning an elbow on the pommel of the saddle.

"You had, 'Siah, you had. We can depend upon you, and those red-coated rascals there must be kept unsuspicious and their fears—

if they have any—lulled to sleep. I have one man already who proposes to put his head in the Lion's mouth and return—providing the jaws do not close on him—to tell us in what state the old pile of stone is kept."

"But what has started you out so suddenly, Colonel Allen?" demanded the widow.

"What! have ye not heard? There was a packet came from Boston yesterday."

"We have seen nobody this week," declared Enoch.

"There has been blood shed, friends," said the giant, earnestly, his eyes flashing and the color in his cheek deepening. "American freemen have been shot down like sheep in the slaughter!"

"Where? Who were killed? What was the cause? Who did it?" were some of the queries hurled at their informant by the little group.

"Fifty men, they say, were murdered. At Lexington, in Massachusetts. There were munitions stored there belonging to the militia. The British got word of it and marched from Boston to destroy the goods. They fired on our people at the bridge and when the poor

fellows broke and ran they followed and potted them like rabbits! War has begun, friends. Nothing under the blue canopy can stop it now. American blood has been shed and I tell you it is but the beginning of the flood which must pour from our veins until these colonies are free!"

"Oh, Colonel! you do not believe that?" cried the widow. "Surely this trouble can be averted. Calmer and more honest men will gain control and prevail. War is an awful thing."

"True, Widow Harding. And well may you say it who have two sons to give for freedom. But mark my words, madam! Those two boys of yours will be needed, and if the Almighty spares them they will be some years older before either side in this controversy gives in. . . . Now friends, I must away. You know what is expected of you, 'Siah. Young Nuck, you'll be wanted at Bennington to-morrow."

"Oh, shall our people really attack Ticonderoga?" cried Kate. "The schoolmaster says that is the strongest fortress in the Colonies."

"Your schoolmaster is a bit of a Tory, I

fear, miss," said Allen, smiling down upon her. "We shall have to 'view' him if he tells such tales in school," and waving his gauntleted hand he rode swiftly away from the homestead.

"I am off at once, folks," said 'Siah, beginning to make his pack for the journey. "I'll see you up near Old Ti, Nuck, for the Colonel means business sure! We may have some such doin's up there as your father and I had under Rogers and Old Put years ago."

He went away shortly and there was little the Hardings could do that day but talk over the wonderful news and let their fancy run upon the future. The widow saw that coming which she had feared for months, but she was cheerful. Nuck must go on this expedition to Lake Champlain, and she said it with unshaken voice. Bryce was to remain to guard the home, for there was no knowing what the result of the attack on Old Ti might be.

The alarming intelligence brought by Colonel Allen had its effect upon the younger members of the family as well as on the older, for late in the afternoon Harry came running to his mother with the information that there

was a man lurking in the forest across the creek. The child had seen the stranger twice and being fearful that the man was there for no good purpose was much troubled. The older boys were in the field at work, but when the widow blew the horn Enoch came up to learn the cause, for it was not yet supper time. Hearing Harry's report he seized his rifle and went to the creek bank, approaching the spot very carefully, for he feared at once that their enemy, Simon Halpen, might have dared follow him from Westminster.

He had scarcely reached the creek, however, when he was apprised of the identity of the visitor. A head, in the black locks of which a tuft of eagle feathers was fastened, appeared above the bushes, and the next moment the person thus betrayed came out into full view and beckoned him. It was Crow Wing who had approached the Harding place through the forest. Enoch leaped into his own boat and paddled across, remembering the Indian's promise the year before to visit him at some time for the purpose of examining the vicinity of the spot where Jonas Harding had been slain.

CHAPTER XVII

THE CLOVEN HOOF

The grave face of the young Indian brave was undisturbed by a smile as he greeted the white youth whom he had not seen for more than a year. But he shook Enoch's hand with an emphatic "Umph!" when the latter sprang ashore.

"Crow Wing!" exclaimed young Harding. "I thought you had forgotten us in these parts. You've been away a long time."

"Umph! Injin no forget friends," remarked Crow Wing, sententiously.

"And you've come here to see me—'way from Lake George?"

"Umph!" was again the non-committal answer. "Harding and Crow Wing go hunt, —shoot deer? Crow Wing need new moccasins," and he thrust forward one foot on which was a ragged covering. But Nuck knew well enough the Indian had not traveled through the wilderness from Lake George merely for the pleasure of going on a deer

hunt with him. But he said, doubtfully: "We're pretty busy just now, Crow Wing. Can't go far with you."

"Not go far. Plenty deer yonder," and he pointed in the direction of the lick where Jonas Harding had been killed. Nuck understood. "I'll go with you. Will you come across and eat supper with us?"

But the Indian shook his head vigorously. "Will eat yonder. Have meat. Harding get rifle and blanket. Will make fire."

He turned about instantly and plunged into the forest. Enoch was astonished by his manner and words, familiar as he was with the peculiarities of the red race. Crow Wing had never refused to eat with them before; he had always seemed to enjoy the "white squaw's" cooking. But Enoch had no fear that his one-time enemy was playing him a trick. He paddled across the creek for his blanket, told his mother that he was going on a torch-light hunt, with whom he was going, and without further explanation returned to follow his red friend. He had noted the direction the young brave had taken. The way led directly to that little glade where,

nearly four years before, he had spied upon Simon Halpen, the Yorker, and Crow Wing had driven him so ignominiously home. There was a fire here now, but the Indian was alone.

An appetizing odor of broiling flesh greeted the white youth, for it was already growing dark in the forest and Crow Wing was preparing supper. Enoch did not open the conversation, but busied himself with making a couple of bark platters out of which they might eat the meat when it was cooked. He was anxious enough to broach the subject uppermost in his mind; but he knew Crow Wing better than to do that. Anxiety, or curiosity, were emotions which only squaws gave way to, and Enoch would not exhibit his feelings and so disgust his red brother.

Crow Wing was evidently a man of importance in his tribe now, and his gravity was far beyond his years. While they ate Enoch asked a question or two about his people, and if the decimated tribe, which had never recovered numerically from a scourge of smallpox, still resided near Lake George. He learned then that the Indians had struck

their lodges and were journeying toward the northern wilderness. The old chief, Crow Wing's father, was dead, and the youth himself aspired to be the leader of his people. From a word or two he let drop and from his manner of speaking, Enoch judged that the older men of the tribe had some doubt of Crow Wing's ability to govern the braves; but evidently the youth had strong hopes of gaining their confidence—and that by some act in the near future. What his plan for advancement was, Enoch could not get his friend to tell.

"Why do your people leave the shores of the pleasant water?" asked the white boy.

"Injin not 'lone there now. Red-coat come; then white farmer. Push, push; crowd, crowd; no game. Injin starve."

"And where are you going?"

"To the hunting grounds of the Hurons."

"But then there will be war between your people and the Hurons."

"No; no war. Hurons be squaws—children; Iroquois master 'em. Then, war-hatchet buried between Hurons and Six Nations.

Buried when French and Yenghese bury hatchet—long time 'go."

Enoch, with more than curiosity, yet speaking in a careless manner, continued his questioning: "What would the people of Crow Wing do if there was another war?"

The Indian flashed a sudden sharp glance at him. "How could be?" he asked, craftily. "Yenghese got many red-coats—much gun. French no fight more."

"Suppose we should fight the red-coats?"

"Umph! Me hear Long-guns" (the Virginians) "talk fight to Six Nations. No. Yenghese send too many big chiefs over water."

"Those big chiefs aren't always good," returned Enoch, quickly. "Your people remember General Abercrombie. He did not know how to fight in these forests. And there was Braddock; he was no good at all. He wouldn't have been beaten if he'd taken Colonel Washington's advice. I'd give a lot more when it comes to a fight for our Major Putnam, Mr. Washington, and Ethan Allen."

The Indian's face was gloomy. He had finished eating now and leaned back against a

tree while he puffed the tobacco in the little copper pipe which was his constant companion. Not until the pipe was smoked out did he speak. "Harding my friend," he finally said, in his grave tone, repeating a formula which he had used so many times since the night Nuck had saved him from the wolves. "Harding my friend. Crow Wing know what is in his mind. He thinks to fight the red-coats—to take their great stockades; he is not afraid of their many guns. But he is foolish; he is as a child; he does not understand. Let him open his ears and listen to his friend."

The young chief had assumed that oracular tone and manner so dear to the red man in his counsels. His earnestness, however, impressed Enoch. "The white youth and his friends are angry with the great King across the water; they would kill his red-coats. But the red-coats are like leaves when the frost comes; they fall to the ground and so cover the earth; and it is thus with the red-coats for numbers. And the Six Nations will be with the red-coats; Crow Wing's people will be with them. If there is war we will

take many scalps; we will come here," with a gesture, sweeping in the Bennington country, "and then Crow Wing and Harding not be friends. So Crow Wing come now to say to Harding, 'Good-bye.'"

"But why do not the Indians help us instead of the red-coats?" demanded Enoch, striving to speak calmly.

"The great King give us blankets; he give us powder for scalp; he give us gun. The red-coats let Injin fight his own way. And Crow Wing be great war chief!" he exclaimed, with some emphasis. It was plain that he expected to make his position with his tribe secure by his valor in battle, should the settlers and the British come to a rupture. He refrained from speaking longer, however, rising soon and covering the fire which he had kindled. Then, seizing a bundle of torches and his rifle, he motioned Enoch to follow and they set off through the forest toward the deer-lick.

Although he felt the utmost confidence in the fact that Crow Wing had not come clear from Lake George simply to give him this warning and to bid him good-bye, Enoch

still remained silent upon that subject which the Indian's appearance had brought so forcibly to his mind. Through the darkened forest, in which the owls now hooted mournfully, the white youth followed the red without a word; every step was taking them nearer to that place where his father had been found dead so long ago. Crow Wing had spoken with some confidence the year before of being able to find, even at this late day, some sign which should disprove the generally accepted belief in the manner of Jonas Harding's death.

The brave soon reached the deeply worn runway which Enoch, on the morning he was introduced to the reader, followed to the creek, and soon the two came upon the little glade where the saline deposits in the earth had attracted the deer and other animals since such creatures inhabited the forest. Dark as it was Enoch could even distinguish the very tree out of which the catamount had sprung at him, and the murmur of the hurrying waters down the rocky bed reached his ear. Here 'Siah Bolderwood and the other neighbors had found the dead body of the

elder Harding, apparently trampled and gored to death by the huge buck whose hoofprints marked the ground all about. Enoch had seldom passed the spot without a shudder—especially since he had so nearly lost his own life there.

Still the Indian made no comment, nor mentioned the real reason for which they had come to the lick. He wet his finger and held it up so as to get the direction of the wind. Then circling the lick and getting between it and the creek-bank, he flung down the bundle of torches and motioned Enoch back into the deeper shadow. With his own flint and steel, and using a bit of tinder from the leather pouch he carried, he lit one of the resinous torches. This he stood upright some little distance away, yet not too near the piece of ground where the creatures of the forest were accustomed to obtain their salt. Then, crouching beside his white friend, the Indian remained motionless and speechless for the next three hours. Once Enoch crept out and renewed the torch which had burned low; then he returned to Crow Wing's side.

All the sounds of the forest at night are not

to be distinguished with ease. Even Enoch, bred in the wilderness and possessing much knowledge of wood-ranging, heard only the coarser sounds. Therefore he lay half dreaming for some moments after the Indian raised his head and lent an attentive ear to some noise which came from far away. The night-owl's hoot was intermittent; a lone wolf howled mournfully on the hillside; in the swamp a catamount screamed as it pounced upon its prey. But it was none of these sounds which had attracted the Indian's attention. Enoch suddenly roused to see Crow Wing softly reach for his gun and bring the weapon slowly to his shoulder.

The white youth already had his own weapon in hand. He tried to pierce the darkness beyond the flickering torch with his eyes, seeing naught at first but shapeless shadows. At length, however, the sound that had warned Crow Wing of the approach of their game, was audible to Enoch's much less acute ear. It was that of a steady grinding of a ruminant animal feeding. The creature was coming slowly nearer and soon the hunters could plainly hear it cropping the leaves and

twigs along the path; then, having gained a choice mouthful, the grinding of the molars recommenced.

Suddenly the thick brush across the glade parted and the animal halted with a surprised snuff—one might almost say gasp of astonishment. The crash in the bushes betrayed that the creature had flung itself half around in its contemplated flight; then it hesitated; the flaming torch spurred its curiosity and, there being no movement in the glade, except of the shadows caused by the dancing flame from the fragrant pine, the startled creature was tempted.

And being tempted to the point of hesitation, it was lost! Slowly, blowing as it came yet drawing nearer and nearer to the light, the beast moved out of the brush into the open. Suddenly Enoch saw it—the branching antlers, the fawn-colored breast, the pointed, outstretched, eager muzzle, the great eyes in which the torch reflected a glint of fire. It was a magnificent buck, the largest specimen of the deer tribe the youth had ever seen. Suddenly Crow Wing jogged his elbow. A glance passed between them. Each under-

stood the other's intention. The Indian fired, his ball entering just above the buck's breast and ploughing slantingly upward through the throat. With a snort of terror the buck swerved to one side and might have gotten away had not Enoch's shot found a more vulnerable spot behind the foreleg. The heart of the great deer was punctured, and it fell in the agony of death.

"Umph! Now Crow Wing have new moccasins," the Indian grunted, without emotion. But Enoch went forward, lighting a second torch the better to view the great buck. It was still now and outstretched on the earth looked even larger than when in life. The thought flashed through his mind: "Ah! perhaps this was the very brute—this enormous fellow with his hoofs bigger than those of a steer and his terrible horns—that killed my father here. Could it be possible?"

Looking upon this huge buck, noting its power and its fierce aspect, though the brute's eye was glazed by death, he wondered if, by any chance, he had been accusing an innocent person? This brute would have been perfectly able to kill a man. Naught but the

hoofmarks of the deer were found about the body of his father. How, then, could Simon Halpen be in any wise guilty of his enemy's death?

But Crow Wing brought the white youth to a realization of present things. The Indian knew that their hunting was over for that night. No other deer would approach the lick, for the smell of the blood from the slain buck would warn its mates away. Only the creatures of prey would be attracted now. So he was down on his knees and had already begun to flay the dead carcass, and Enoch, seeing this, began to help him. It was near midnight, and when the hide was off, the tongue and the most tasty parts removed, Crow Wing built another fire, wrapped his blanket about him, and lay down to sleep.

But Enoch could not sleep. He had cut off and hung up near the camp a haunch of the venison to take back with him in the morning. They had removed so far from the lick that certain preying beasts dared quarrel over the remains of the noble buck until daylight; but the youth sat with his back against a tree and his rifle across his knees until the

dimpling water of the creek was kissed by the first beams of the sun which shot over the distant range of hills. His thoughts were sufficient to keep him wide awake.

Enoch was not the first to stir; but Crow Wing, possessing the hunter's faculty of awaking at any desired hour, sat up and threw back his blanket. "My brother did not sleep," he said, looking upon the white youth with gloomy brow.

"No; I couldn't do that, Crow Wing," Enoch returned, sadly.

The Indian got upon his feet, threw wood upon the fire, and prepared to cook the deer meat he had reserved. They ate in silence as they had the night before. Never had young Harding seen the redskin act so strangely, for during the winter Crow Wing had spent with Enoch and Lot on the Otter, he had by no means been silent or morose. The white youth could not fail to see that something—something beside what troubled Enoch—bore heavily upon Crow Wing's mind.

After eating the Indian scattered and covered the embers of the fire and prepared to leave the spot. He went toward the lick

where the deer had been torn to pieces by the prowling animals Enoch had heard. At the edge of the clearing he halted and attracted his companion's attention by a commanding gesture. "Harding's father found here by the tall white man," he said, simply.

"Yes. 'Siah Bolderwood found him," Enoch sadly admitted.

"Then we look—see how Hawknose kill him."

"But Crow Wing, it was four years ago——"

The Indian stopped him with a gesture of disdain. "Does my brother think we look for trail? No, no! The white man not find trail?"

"Of course not. There were only marks of the buck's hoofs."

Crow Wing pointed to the spoor of the dead buck made the night before. "Trail big as that?" he asked.

"Yes. It might have been this buck."

"No buck," declared the other, emphatically and then began to move about the open glade, examining each tree trunk as he went. Enoch did not understand his actions but he followed him. The Indian gazed upon each

tree scrutinizingly, and no knothole in the rough boles escaped his attention.

When the tree proved to be hollow at its base the searcher experimented with his gun barrel, poking it into the farther extremity of the cavity and rattling out the decayed wood and the débris of squirrel nests and owl lairs. In several cases these creatures themselves were disturbed, the lively squirrels to run chattering up the higher branches, the owls lumbering away into the forest, bumping against the trees in their blindness, and hooting mournfully at the disturbers of their peace. All this time Crow Wing continued with an unmoved face. Not an interstice in the roots of the trees escaped his eye and to Enoch, who could not imagine what he was looking for, his actions seemed without reason. But he knew better than to ask him the nature of his search.

For two hours Crow Wing circled about the little glade. There was not a tree which escaped him, nor did any hollow go unexamined which was within reach of the tallest man. Crow Wing's face betrayed neither hope nor disappointment and therefore his companion

could not tell how important this search was. The patience displayed by the Indian was all that suggested the object of his examination to be of any moment.

At length, in poking the barrel of his gun into the hollow at the base of a big tree Crow Wing disturbed some object which fell out upon the ground. Enoch, who looked over his shoulder could not at first imagine what it was. He saw several rotting straps attached to the thing, however, and as his companion with a grunt of evident satisfaction, began poking into the hollow still further, the white boy picked the object up and knocked the dirt and decayed wood off it. It was so strange an object that at first Enoch saw no connection between it and the matter which he and Crow Wing had discussed—Jonas Harding's death.

It was the dry and broken hoof of some ruminant animal—an ox, perhaps, for it was too large for any deer that Enoch had ever seen. It was even larger than the hoof of the buck he and Crow Wing had recently shot. And when the boy thought of that he was reminded of the hoof prints which had been found all about the lick when his father's

body was discovered lying there. He uttered a stifled exclamation and drawing up one foot fitted the cloven hoof against the sole of his moccasin. The rotten straps or thongs would once have bound the thing to a man's foot. He might have stood upon it—walked upon it, indeed; and the impression left by this cloven hoof would naturally lead one to suppose that a big deer had been that way!

Enoch turned with sweating brow and shaking hands toward the Indian. Crow Wing stood upright again and now held a second hoof, likewise supplied with thongs, in his hand. They looked at each other.

"Umph!" grunted Crow Wing. "Now Harding know? See moose hoofs. Crow Wing know where moose killed—see moose killed. Hawknose kill much that winter; Hawknose hunt with Injins up north; then come back to crick. Harding 'member what Crow Wing tell him when trapping on Otter Crick? See Hawknose running; blood on clothes; blood on hands and on gun. Now Harding know how father be killed."

Enoch's eyes blazed with wrath. "I know, Crow Wing. I believe what you tell me. I

see no other explanation of the affair. Give me those hoofs, Crow Wing."

"Harding keep them till he punish Hawknose?" queried the Indian.

"Yes."

The young brave pulled his belt tighter and prepared to depart. "Hawknose never Crow Wing's brother," he said. "Harding been brother. But now the hatchet will be dug up. The Long-guns cannot get the Six Nations to fight the red-coats. And the friends of my white brother will be beaten. They will become the squaws of the red-coats and of the great King across the sea. So my people will go north and join the red-coats." He shook Enoch's hand gravely. "Crow Wing and Harding been brothers; but when they meet again be enemies. Umph?"

"I hope we'll never meet again, then, Crow Wing," declared the white youth. "I hope there will be no war. More than that, I hope your people will not join the British if there is war."

But without further speech, or a glance behind him, the Indian brave strode away into the forest and was quickly lost to view.

CHAPTER XVIII

"THE CROSS OF FIRE"

HAVING at length been assured beyond peradventure that his suspicions were true, a desire for vengeance upon Simon Halpen sprang to life in Enoch's heart. He forgot the momentous matter which had filled his mind before the appearance of Crow Wing the evening before. He thought only of his father's murderer, the man who had tried to injure them all, even to the point of destroying their home and attempting to shoot himself.

As he tramped back to the house with the haunch of venison on his shoulder, he determined to tell nobody there of the finding of the moose hoofs which explained the mystery of his father's death. The hoofs he saved to show Bolderwood, and for evidence against Simon Halpen if the opportunity ever arose to punish that villain. It was easy to see with this evidence before him, how the awful deed had been accomplished. With the

moose hoofs strapped upon his feet the Yorker had crept through the forest on the trail of the unconscious Jonas Harding; had seen him shoot the doe; and then falling upon him suddenly had beaten him to the earth with his clubbed rifle and had bruised and mangled him so terribly that the neighbors, at first glance, pronounced the poor man killed by a mad buck. Hurrying from the vicinity, dress and hands covered with blood as Crow Wing had seen him, Halpen had hidden the deer hoofs in the hollow of the tree, and escaped to Albany, his vengeance accomplished.

"But he shall suffer for this yet," thought the youth, with compressed lips. "God will punish him if the courts do not. And sometime he may be delivered into my hand, and if he is ——"

The implied threat frightened him, and he did not follow it even in his thoughts, but by again turning his attention to the matter which Ethan Allen's visit the day before had suggested, he strove to bring his mind into better tone before meeting his mother. He feared that the expression on his features

would betray something of his horror and determination to her sharp eyes. When he reached home, however, he found the family so greatly excited that nobody thought to either ask questions or to notice his behavior. A drill had been called at Bennington and Enoch was forced to saddle the horse and hurry away at once. Under the present conditions it was thought best for Bryce to remain at home, for if the Green Mountain Boys marched upon Ticonderoga the younger Harding could not be spared to accompany the expedition.

The Council was in session and the leaders of the Green Mountain Boys remained in Bennington for more than a week. Couriers had arrived from the south and east and it was known that the British were rapidly being shut up in Boston. The Massachusetts Colony was afire with wrath because of the Lexington massacre. The Grants people were quite as rebellious against the King's authority, with the sad affair at Westminster fresh in their minds. The proposal to capture the British strongholds on the lake met with favor everywhere. Small bodies of armed

men began to come in and a camp was planned at Castleton. It was said that a large body of troops was to march from Western Massachusetts and Connecticut to aid the expedition. When Ethan Allen returned and heard of these reinforcements he immediately desired to bring in more of his own people for the work proposed.

"This is our work," he declared. "We have planned to lead this campaign and lead it we shall. We must show the southerners that we are one in heart and intention and therefore every able-bodied man in the Grants must come in. It isn't enough for us to have some men; we must have the most men and thereby control the expedition. We want the honor of it!"

"You must lead us, Colonel!" exclaimed Warner, who, although he had no such following as did Allen, was sure of a goodly company of determined men to join the expedition. "We'll follow you into Old Ti or anywhere else; but no stranger must command."

"Then I must have more men to my following than anybody else," declared Allen,

vigorously. "I have seen a great many myself, but there are districts I haven't been able to reach."

"We must send out a cross of fire to rouse the clans," Captain Warner said, with a smile. "But who shall go? Bolderwood?"

"'Siah has reached his own land—where he's let the light in upon some acres, I understand—near Old Ti. And he's got his work cut out for him there. No; I have the chap in mind to send up along the Otter. There's only one thing I fear. I understand that a plaguey Yorker has been seen about Manchester for a week past. Just what he's so attentive to certain people for at this time bothers me, Seth."

"But if he's only a surveyor, or speculator ——"

"A Yorker means a King's man these times," exclaimed Allen. "I got a sight of him—a lean, hook-nosed fellow with a face puckered like a walnut; but we didn't pass the time o' day. I think he's spying on us."

"If he is ——" began Warner, wrathfully.

"I'm sorry for him, that's all," declared the Green Mountain leader. "If I catch him

and it's proven against him, I'll hang him to the highest limb in this neck of woods."

"But the person you will send out with the warning, Colonel?" cried Warner. "Whom have you in your mind?"

"I see him coming now," declared the leader, laughing. "I sent word to him last evening. He should have been to Castleton ere this; but the widow ——"

"It's young Harding!" cried Captain Warner. "I recognize him. And, Colonel, from what I have seen of the young man, he'll bear out your confidence in him."

Enoch had approached near enough to hear this last and he flushed deeply. "I was told you wanted to see me, Colonel Allen," he said, saluting awkwardly.

"I do indeed," said Allen. "You're ready for campaigning, I see. Leave your traps—even to your blanket and gun—with Master Fay here. You'll want to travel light where I send you," and he proceeded to explain the mission he wished the youth to perform.

"I am ready, Colonel," declared Enoch, throwing off his knapsack.

"Good! Away with you at once. Use

yonder horse till you get to Manchester. Beyond that there will scarcely be bridle paths, so a horse will be in your way. Take the word around that the time has come to strike. And have them rendezvous at Castleton. Be off, my boy, and may success go with you!"

The horse in question was a fine steed that Allen had ridden into town that very morning. The youth sprang into the saddle and, understanding that haste and cautiousness were the two things most desired of him, trotted the animal easily out of the town and then put the spurs to him along the road to Manchester. He spared neither the horse nor himself until he reached the latter place and had left the steed in the keeping of a loyal man to be returned at the first opportunity to Colonel Allen. Of course, all the men in this section of the Grants had been warned of the proposed expedition against the fortresses on Champlain; it was those who dwelt deeper in the wilderness to whom young Enoch Harding had been sent.

He knew what was expected of him. And he knew, too, how most of the Grants people

would receive the news. Colonel Allen was beloved by them as were few leaders. This Connecticut giant who had given up his desire for a college education and a life among books because duty called him to the work of supporting his family, who had been by turn a farmer, an iron forger, had tried mining and other toilsome industries, but who nearly always worked with a book in his hand or beside him where he could read and study—this man with his free, jovial air and utterly reckless courage, was become as one of the heroes of old to the people of Vermont. The men on his side of the controversy in which Allen had taken such a deep interest, loved him devotedly; those who espoused the New York cause hated him quite as dearly, for they feared him.

So when Enoch set out from Manchester to go from farmstead to farmstead and from clearing to clearing, he was not in much doubt as to whom he should send to Castleton and whom he should pass by without speaking to regarding the proposed expedition. There would be no doubtful settlers. The line between Tories and Whigs was

drawn too sharply; and every Whig stood by Ethan Allen.

Enoch had learned something of the paths and runways of this part of the Grants. It had been near here that Lot Breckenridge and himself, with Crow Wing, had spent a winter trapping. Lot had now gone, so he had heard, to Boston as he said he should if fighting began. He had gone to help Israel Putnam and the other New England leaders pen the British into the city and aid in that series of maneuvres which finally drove the red-coats into their ships. As for himself, Enoch was only eager to be one of those who should storm the walls of Ticonderoga, and glad as he was to have been singled out for this present duty, he was determined to husband his strength so as to get back to Castleton before the army gathering there should move against the British fortifications.

He walked rapidly; more often he ran. In the pouch at his belt he carried parched corn, like an Indian on the warpath. Occasionally at a clearing, where some hardy borderer was scratching a living from the half-cleared soil, he would stop long enough

to eat. But usually he halted only to give the good man of the house the message from Ethan Allen and, as he passed on and entered the forest on the further side he looked back to see the settler, his gun on his shoulder, bidding his family good-bye preparatory to setting out for the rendezvous appointed for the American troops.

But nature revolts when a certain point of exhaustion is reached. Refusing to remain the night at one kindly settler's home, Enoch finally found himself in the forest a goodly distance from any other house. The path could be followed quite easily, the woods being open; but he was footsore and thoroughly wearied. He shrank from lying down beside the trail, however, for more reasons than one. On several occasions that afternoon he had heard of the presence of another traveler in the vicinity, and the identity of this man he could not learn. The settlers who had mentioned him, however, declared they believed him to be a New York agent, or a spy from the British across the lake, who was going through the region to discover just how the people felt regarding the rising trouble between the Co-

lonials and the mother country. Such, at least, had been the trend of his conversation with the loyal Americans to whom he had been unwise enough to speak.

The appearance of the man, too, rather troubled Enoch. He was said to be tall and lean, with a very black face, a huge nose and fiery eyes. The youth remembered how Simon Halpen looked a few weeks before when he saw him at Westminster, and this pretty well described the scoundrel. Halpen was in the Grants—or had been recently. Perhaps he had dared come across the mountains toward the lake on some errand for the Tory party, and the thought that the man who had murdered his father and who had tried to take his own life, might be within rifle shot, troubled the youth exceedingly. He could not drive away this thought and when finally he was forced to stop for rest he trembled to think that perhaps the light of his campfire would attract an enemy more to be feared than either the wolves or catamounts.

But he built his fire, broiled a piece of meat which the last settler he spoke to had given him, ate his supper, and then prepared

to sleep for a few hours. The moon would rise late, and he desired to set forward on his journey again as soon as it was light enough in the forest. Just at present the darkness shrouded all objects. But when he lay down with his feet toward the blaze and his head upon a heap of moss for a pillow, he could not sleep, tired though he was. His nerves were all alive. His limbs twitched so that he could not keep them still. Every sound of the forest smote upon his ear with insistence. Although his muscles were wearied his eyes would not close.

Who was the Yorker that had crossed his path so many times during the past few hours? What did he desire here in the Otter country? Was he a spy for the British? or was he upon his own business? And, above all, was he, Nuck Harding, in danger? The stranger might be roaming the forest even then, hunting for the messenger of the Green Mountain chieftain. He had likely heard that Nuck was going from farmer to farmer, as Nuck had heard of his presence, and the man might contemplate stopping him. It would be easy for him to creep upon and

shoot the defenseless youth as he lay before the fire.

Nuck's only weapons were his knife and the hatchet stuck in his belt. Lying there within the circle of light cast by the flames he would be an easy mark for any enemy. As minute after minute passed it seemed utterly impossible for him to quench this fear and he finally rose to his feet and got out of the fire light. He stood in the deep shadow of a tree trunk and cast searching glances around the tiny clearing in which he had established his camp. Not a living thing did he observe.

But if there was an enemy on his trail, and he should come near the camp and see it deserted he would suspect a trap at once. Either he would circle about so as to finally find Enoch, or he would fly from the ambush at once. "I expect I am very foolish,—losing good sleep that I need, too!" muttered the young fellow. "But still——"

He could not explain the strange unrest that possessed him. He was not of a particularly nervous temperament; therefore his present mood troubled him the more. There was danger menacing him; he felt it, if he

could not see nor understand it. The only possibility of peril which reason suggested was through the agency of that stranger. "I must have things here so that he will not suspect that I am on my guard," the youth muttered.

Forthwith he dragged a piece of a broken tree-trunk to the fire, wrapped his coat about it and placed his cap at the end of the stick farthest from the blaze. He was careful to place the rude dummy far enough away from the fire so that its flickering light should not be cast upon it too strongly. It really looked, when he was through, as though some person lay there asleep. He did not feed the flames too generously, but left burning some hard wood sticks, the glowing coals of which would lend but little light to the scene. Then he retired again to the shadow of the tree where, crouching between two huge exposed roots, he waited with sleepless eyes for that which was, perhaps, merely the phantom of his fears.

CHAPTER XIX

THE RISING OF THE CLANS

As still as the shadow of the tree itself, Enoch lay with his face toward the camp. Truly, had the forest not been so dark outside the radiance of the fire, he would have set out again upon his journey, and left this spot which seemed to his troubled mind the lurking place of some serious danger. The minutes grew to an hour, however, without a suspicious sound reaching his ears. The usual noises of the forest—the hooting of the owl, the wolf's cry, the whimper of the wildcat—were all that disturbed the repose of the wilderness.

But suddenly a dry twig snapped somewhere near him. The sound went through the anxious youth like a shock of electricity. Its direction he could not fathom ; yet he was sure that the branch had crackled under the pressure of a foot. Somebody—or something —was approaching his fire, which now threw a

dull red light across the forest glade. Enoch's eyes were fastened first upon one blot of shadow and then another. Occasionally, too, he darted a glance over his shoulder, that the approaching enemy might not come upon him unawares. Just at that time Enoch would have given much for his rifle. Its presence would have inspired him with a deal of courage. The very fact that the danger, which intuition rather than reason assured him was threatening, came from an unknown source, increased his fears. Perhaps Simon Halpen was not within a hundred miles of that identical spot. He who was visiting the Tories and New York sympathizers of this region was possibly nothing worse than the agent of a land speculator. The youthful Green Mountain Boy might be the only human being within five miles.

But suddenly that happened which shattered this fallacious web of thought in an instant. In the deep shadow of a thick clump of brush upon the other side of the fire, the youth observed a movement—rather, a flash or glint of light. The fire, increasing unexpectedly by the falling apart of one of the

logs, had sent a penetrating ray of light into the thicket and there it glittered upon some polished piece of metal. Nothing else could have sent forth this answering gleam; it was not a pair of eyes; Enoch was confident of that.

"He is there!" whispered the youth, and he crouched lower between the roots. His eyes, sharp as they were, could not penetrate the gloom of the brush clump, and the glittering metal had now disappeared. But he was sure that the intruder was still there, reconnoitring the camp. Would he suspect the ruse? Would he observe that the body lying by the fire was simply a dummy? The youth was glad to see that the log with his jacket and cap upon it lay almost entirely in the shadow and that one coat-sleeve was stretched out upon the ground in a very natural manner indeed.

The moments that passed then were really terrible to young Harding. He knew himself to be in no immediate danger from this mysterious individual who had crept near his camp. Surely, the man could not see him where he lay shrouded in the dark-

ness. Yet the thought that he was being dogged by a deadly enemy possessed him, and the doubt as to what the unknown would do next, brought the sweat to his brow and limbs and set him trembling like one with an ague. Not a breath disturbed the bushes, yet he felt that the man was there—there across the opening in the forest with his eyes fixed upon the supine figure near the fire. Had he not been warned by that mysterious feeling which had kept his eyes open and his nerves alert he, Enoch Harding, might now be lying unconscious with a deadly weapon trained upon him!

And then the shot was fired! Enoch expected it, yet the explosion almost betrayed him to the enemy. A gasp of terror left his lips. Incidental with the explosion he heard the thud of the ball as it penetrated the log, and the shock of the impact actually stirred the dummy. It leaped upon the uneven ground!

This fact was an awful accessory to the attempted murder. The inanimate object had moved as a human being would if suddenly shot through a vital part. Perhaps the very

gasp of horror Enoch had uttered reached the ears of him who had fired from ambush. At least the enemy did not seek to come nearer. Indeed, the youth heard a crash in the brush and then the retreat of rapid footsteps. Having done, as he supposed, the awful deed, the murderer fled from the spot. Enoch had half risen to his feet. Now he sank upon his knees, clasped his hands, and thanked God for his preservation.

But he did not leave the sanctuary of the forest's shadow until he was fully convinced that the villain who had made the attempt upon his life was far away. Then, still shaking from the nervous terror inspired by the incident, he crept to the dying fire, secured his cap and coat, and went back to the roots of the tree again until the growing glow above the treetops announced the rising of the moon. The sky grew bright rapidly and soon the moonbeams wandered among the straight, handsome trees and lay calmly upon the earth. He could once more see objects about him with almost the clearness of full daylight.

Enoch arose and crossed to the clump of

brush from which the treacherous shot had been fired. Through a break in the branches a flood of moonlight now silvered the earth at this point. He dropped upon one knee and examined the ground closely. There were the marks of the feet of him who had tried to shoot a helpless and sleeping human being. Enoch shuddered and placed his fingers in the impression of the moccasins. The incident that had just transpired was very real to him now.

But he had not come here merely to assure himself of this fact. The bullet in the log and the hole through his coat were sufficient, if he had indeed doubted his eyes and ears before. He glanced down at the coat. Oddly enough the bullet had torn its way through the stout homespun directly over his heart!

He glanced keenly now from side to side and saw that the enemy who made the treacherous attack had come from the trail he had followed that afternoon, and had returned in the same direction. He followed the footsteps which led away from the brush clump. In doing this he was quickly assured that the man who had shot at him was a white man.

An Indian walks with his toes pointed inward; this individual, even as he ran, pointed his toes out. He was certain, therefore, that his enemy was no wandering redskin.

"It was Halpen—I am sure of it!" muttered the youth, striking into the trail at last and continuing the journey upon which the darkness had overtaken him. "He believes that he has killed me. I only hope he will not be undeceived. But if he is ever in my power he shall suffer! What a villain the man is to follow our family and seek to murder and injure us! Oh, I hope this war which Colonel Allen says is surely beginning, will give us folks of the Grants our freedom from New York as well as from England. I fear men like Halpen more than I do the soldiers of the King."

Although he had not slept, Enoch was rested in body and he traveled quite rapidly. Before dawn he had aroused two settlers from their slumbers, delivered Colonel Allen's message, and gone on his way. He observed no signs of his enemy of the night and was confident that the man had not continued on this trail, and was not, therefore, ahead of

him. But he determined not to sleep in the forest during the remainder of his journey. He spent the day in alarming the farmers, circling around into the mountains before night and stopping at last with a distant pioneer who, with his two grown sons, promised to go back with him to the rendezvous of Allen's army at Castleton in the morning.

Enoch's mind was burdened with the mystery of Halpen's presence in the Grants at this time, however. Surely the Yorker could not be upon private business. He must have a mission from either the land speculators, the New York authorities, or from those even higher. The plans of the Colonials to attack Old Ti and seize the munitions of war stored there, might have been whispered in the ears of the British commander, De la Place. Perhaps he had sent this man, who knew the territory so well, to spy upon the Green Mountain Boys and their friends. Simon Halpen could do the cause afoot much harm by returning swiftly to the lake and warning the commander of Fort Ticonderoga. Enoch believed Colonel Allen should know of Halpen's presence as soon as possible ; and he was de-

termined to return at once, although he certainly deserved rest and refreshment after his arduous journey through the wilderness. Therefore he urged the hurried departure of these three pioneers and before dawn the quartette started for Castleton.

Meanwhile, at the camp of the Green Mountain Boys much was transpiring of importance to the expedition. The honor of capturing Ticonderoga history gives unconditionally to Ethan Allen and his handful of followers; but the suggestion and preparations for the momentous task was divided between the Colonies of Connecticut, Massachusetts, and the Hampshire Grants, or Vermont, as it was now beginning to be called. In April the authorities of Connecticut raised three hundred pounds for the expense of this expedition and Samuel H. Parsons, Silas Deane (afterward one of America's representatives in Paris, but an arch enemy of Washington) and Benedict Arnold, raised a handful of troops to send north as a nucleus of that army which was expected to fall upon one of the strongest British forts in the country.

At Pittsfield, in western Massachusetts, Colonel Easton had recruited a larger band of earnest patriots, and these, joined with the company from the more southern colony, made a very respectable force to march through the country to Bennington, where they arrived on May third. In the meantime at Albany Messrs. Halsey and Stephens had been pleading with the New York Congress to grant permission for troops to be raised for, and money devoted to, the capture of the same fortresses as the New England leaders had in mind. But, as we have seen, New York was at that time lukewarm in the uprising of the colonies. Beside, the Continental Congress was to meet in seven days and it was judged better by the cautious Yorkers to wait and see what that body of representatives would do before any direct act of war was indulged in. Therefore New York lost her opportunity of joining in one of the most glorious campaigns of the entire Revolutionary period.

The Committee of Safety in Massachusetts, on the other hand, had decided to act against Old Ti. Benedict Arnold, after stirring up

the people to fever pitch in his own colony, Connecticut, went post-haste to Cambridge and demanded a commission and authority to raise and lead the troops against the Champlain forts. This first move of this much-hated man in the Revolution savored of intrigue and self-seeking—as did most of his other public acts. He desired the honor of commanding this expedition, and he was personally courageous enough to march up to the mouths of Old Ti's guns if need be; but he had no personal following and could not hope to recruit men himself for the expedition. Nevertheless, he proposed to have the backing of a regular commission from the Massachusetts committee and thus supersede Colonel Easton. This desire on his part might have become a fact had it not been for one person whom Benedict Arnold did not take into consideration.

The Massachusetts and Connecticut forces were guided to the camp of the Green Mountain Boys while the leaders held a conference at the Catamount Inn in Bennington. Colonel Easton was a truly brave man, and as such was not disturbed by petty jealousy. It

was left to fate to decide who should command the expedition, and Ethan Allen having the largest personal following, was acclaimed commander. Greatly to Captain—now Major—Warner's disappointment his own men did not number as many as the Massachusetts troops; but he gracefully yielded second place to Easton and accepted third himself. Plans for the march through the wilderness were then carefully discussed and the leaders rode to Castleton and reviewed the raw recruits whose valor was, at a later day, to be so noised abroad.

The Green Mountain Boys, after four years of training, presented much the better appearance. And every man was practically a sharpshooter. What their rifles and muskets could do against the thick, if crumbling, walls of Ticonderoga, might with good judgment be asked; but they lacked neither courage nor faith in their leader. They would have followed Ethan Allen through a wall of fire if need be to the line of the British fortifications. In their eyes he was invincible.

On the morning of the start from Castleton the army was paraded—a few hundred

meagrely armed men to march against a fortress, to capture which had cost the British two expensive campaigns and the loss of some three thousand men. Their leaders harangued them, and Ethan Allen's promises of glory and honor inspired quite as much enthusiasm as the commander of any expedition could have wished. There had gathered to observe the departure many gentlemen of the countryside, and not a few of those individuals who, at a time like this, always occupy a prominent position "on the fence"—that is, they having not yet decided which cause to espouse, waited to see whether the King's troops or the earnest patriots would win.

Among these spectators was a well set up man of military bearing, indeed garbed in a military coat, with a cockade in his hat and his hair carefully dressed. He was quite a dandy, or a "macoroni" as the exquisites of that day were called both in London and in the Colonies. His dark visage and hawk-like eye commanded more than a passing glance from all and when, just before the troops started, he was observed to walk across the parade and calmly approach the group of of-

ficers standing at one side, all eyes became fixed upon him.

"Who is that haughty looking man yonder?" asked one spectator of his neighbor who happened to be better informed than his friend, "and what does he here?"

"What he does here I know not," declared the individual thus addressed, "but his name I can tell you, having seen him in Hartford on several occasions. It is Benedict Arnold, a name quite well known—and not altogether honorably—in that part of Connecticut."

CHAPTER XX

THE RIVAL COMMANDERS

At this time Benedict Arnold was thirty-five years of age, a restless, ambitious man who had sought frequently for an opportunity to distinguish himself in life, but who had never been willing to pay the world's price for real success. He looked for a short-cut to power and fortune, and because of his impatience of restraint and the small chances of promotion, he had once deserted from the British army. When the Revolution broke out he was living in Hartford, Connecticut, where his business was that of druggist, and where his reputation was not of the most savory among the more respectable merchants of the town. His character, however, contained those elements of recklessness and personal daring which stand for bravery with many people, and he was something of a hero in the eyes of his thoughtless associates.

It seemed a peculiar fatality that both

Arnold and Allen, coming from the same colony, should go to Bennington and be thrown together at just this time. It was a great moment in Ethan Allen's life; the time was likewise pregnant with the elements which so influenced the after existence of Benedict Arnold. Ethan Allen's mind was filled with a desire to help the Grants, and despite the military glory he craved, he entered into the scheme for the capture of Ticonderoga with a real hope of assisting the patriot cause. He was, indeed, a patriot from the bottom, ready to sacrifice his own interests as well as his life for the general good. Arnold saw in this rising of his fellow-Americans the long sought chance to distinguish himself and gain that power and influence which his nature craved. He saw in the proposed expedition to Ticonderoga a quick road to prominence. For him to see this chance was to grasp it.

Having no following of his own he planned to seize the troops gathered at Castleton and thus have his name go before the Continental Congress as the leader of the expedition. If it was successful the honor would be his; if

it failed, his name would be quite as prominent and the affair might gain him advancement which he could hope for in no other way. He had no thought nor care for the men who, after weeks of toilsome effort, had gathered the little army together. Their feelings in the matter, or their standing with their followers, did not enter into his calculations.

That, indeed, was the secret of Benedict Arnold's life. He never thought of others. He was ever for self. As a boy we read that he was cruel to those smaller and weaker than himself, being the "bully" of the school and of the town in which he lived. He was ever utterly reckless of his reputation and his greatest pleasure seemed to be found in some form of malicious mischief. Personally, however, he did not lack boldness and physical courage. It is told of him that, being dared by other boys, he once seized the arms of a waterwheel and followed its revolutions half a dozen times, being completely submerged in the millrace at every turn. The danger to a handful of illy-armed troops attacking a fortress like Ticonderoga appealed strongly to the man's reckless daring.

Although Allen and Warner came from the same colony as the newcomer, neither knew nor recognized Arnold as he approached the group of officers at this important moment. But Arnold was not a man who could be for long ignored. His military bearing, his dress, and the hauteur of his countenance attracted the attention of the three leaders. "Sir," said Allen, courteously, "you evidently have some communication to make to us?"

"I have, sir," replied Arnold, calmly. "But not having the pleasure of a personal acquaintance with you ——"

"I am Colonel Allen, commander of this expedition," interrupted the other, brusquely. "This is Colonel Easton; this Major Warner. What is your desire?"

"I am Colonel Benedict Arnold," said the newly arrived officer, "and bear a commission from the Massachusetts Committee of Safety with authority to take command of the troops here gathered, or which shall be gathered, and proceed against Forts Ticonderoga and Crown Point," and he drew the commission from his pocket and presented it to the company.

Allen's ruddy face paled for an instant and his eyes flashed. "Do I understand you aright?" he exclaimed, and his voice was sharp enough to be heard by many of the troops near by. "You have come to take command of these men?" and his gesture took in the lines of waiting patriots.

"I have, sir. There is my commission."

Allen's wrath got the better of his politeness and he struck the offending paper from Arnold's hand. Warner stooped hastily and secured it. He and Easton examined the document with angry scrutiny. Both had given way with cheerfulness to Ethan Allen's superiority in the matter; but this affront was personal to them as well as to their beloved leader. Allen, with his arms akimbo and fire flashing from his eyes faced the suave and cold intruder. "Sir!" he exclaimed, "I do not care to see your commission, nor do I acknowledge your authority. I bear a commission from a higher court and recognize an authority higher still."

"What do you mean, Colonel Allen?" demanded Arnold, for the moment fearing that the Green Mountain leader had indeed re-

ceived some appointment from the Continental Congress, perhaps, which would invalidate his own.

"I mean, sir, that my authority is based upon some slight precedence in this matter—a prior claim which dates back some years now, Colonel Arnold. I have led some of these men in defending their homes on more than one occasion and by their free act of will they have made me their leader now."

"Your commission, sir? Where is it?" inquired Arnold, cool again, upon finding that his antagonist's rights were based upon a matter of sentiment.

"It is there, sir!" cried Allen, furiously, turning and pointing to the lines of waiting men. "It is there, sir,—writ on the hearts of those Green Mountain Boys. And a higher commission than any Committee of Safety can seal."

The words were heard by the files of waiting troops and already they had begun to murmur. That their beloved leader should be displaced by any person—no matter how high his office—was more than distasteful to them. At once they were in revolt.

"Ethan Allen forever!" arose the cry. "We'll not march without he commands us!" and more than one threw down his arms. Arnold found himself facing the possibility of marching upon Ticonderoga alone, for the mutiny seemed general.

"Sir, sir!" exclaimed Warner, in anxiety, addressing Arnold. "You see the feeling of these true-hearted men. No person can come here and take command of them in this way. We are not regular troops. We are banded together for the good of all, but we do not yet acknowledge the authority of a sister colony. We desire to be a commonwealth of our own here in the Grants and have already been disturbed enough by usurpers from outside. Reconsider this, I beg of you. For if you persevere the expedition must fail and that which might result in great good to our struggling brethren, will end in harm because of this folly."

Arnold, if ambitious and unfeeling, already saw that he was beaten. He was not obstinate enough to do that which would be sure to redound to his own hurt and discredit. He had not expected such opposition, for he did not

know the veneration in which the Green Mountain Boys held Ethan Allen. Now, seeing himself undone, he did that which for the time endeared him to all. His countenance cleared; a frank emotion played upon his features and advancing a step toward Ethan Allen he said in a clarion voice, heard by all:

"Colonel Allen, you have precedence here after all. I was mistaken in my premises. Give me a musket and let me march in the ranks. I shall be proud to be led by so gallant a commander."

Instantly a volley of cheers broke out among the soldiery, and Allen who, above all men, could appreciate such generosity, offered his hand cordially. "Egad, sir!" he cried, "you are a man after my own heart. When there are so many jealous cattle running about the woods, it is a pleasure to meet with a man. Give me your hand, Colonel Arnold! There is glory enough in this campaign for all, and you shall share the command with me, if you will."

He turned then to his followers. "Men of the Green Mountains!" he cried, "we are to

march at once. Fall in! And with your courage and the help of Jehovah we shall succeed in our undertaking. To your places, gentlemen," to the minor officers, "and Colonel Arnold and I will lead you."

Amid cheers the column moved forward into the forest and took up its line of march toward the shore of Lake Champlain. Never had the Green Mountain wilderness echoed to the tread of such a body of men. And they were worth more than a passing glance for they represented the spirit which made the American Revolution one of the greatest struggles of the ages. Like the campaigns of Joshua of old, the battles of the American yeoman with the trained military of King George proved that, when guided by the God of Battles, the weak can overcome the strong. These men, fighting for their homes and firesides, were inspired with a confidence that overcame even impossibilities. They possessed a faith in their cause and in their leader like that which threw down the walls of Jericho and defeated the allied armies of Canaan.

Even had De la Place and his garrison been

informed of their approach, and of their numbers, he would doubtless have laughed at the possibility of their successfully attacking his fortress. And one there was among the Green Mountain Boys who feared that news of the expedition had already gone to the British commander. Upon his return from the Otter, Enoch Harding had sought and obtained an audience with Colonel Allen, and to him had related his adventure with the Yorker whom he believed to be his deadly enemy, and told his suspicions regarding the man's business in the region. But Ethan Allen was not to be shaken in his confidence, or in his intentions.

"I have an honest man at Ticonderoga now, Master Harding," he said. "If spies were through the country we should hear of them from other sources. But you did right to come to me with this, and if Simon Halpen falls into our hands I will hang him for his past offenses, if not for this attempt on your life."

The appearance of the American troops was welcomed along the route with acclamation. Many settlers, knowing the course the army would take, had waited to join it as it passed

their own doors. Shopkeepers and mechanics left their work and fell into the ranks; the farmer left his plow in the furrow, seized his rifle, and joined his neighbors; a woodsman who was "letting sunlight" into the gloom of the virgin forest, hid his axe under a fallen log and with a deadlier weapon on his shoulder followed in the train; the hunter on the trail of the frightened buck saw the column coming through the forest road and allowed his prey to escape while he turned his attention to matters of graver moment. Thus the army of Americans was swelled from hour to hour by new recruits.

To camp at night was a small matter to these hardy pioneers. The scouts sent out upon either flank acted as hunters and fresh meat was abundant. Besides, every man was fairly supplied with provisions brought from Castleton. Inspired by the energy of Ethan Allen the column rapidly approached the shore of the lake. While some miles away, however, the group of officers riding ahead of the main body, suddenly descried a tall woodsman striding through the forest toward them. "Who is this chap, Major?" de-

manded Allen of his friend Warner. "Had I not sent 'Siah Bolderwood to watch Old Ti like a cat at a rathole, I'd declare this to be he."

"And so it is, Colonel!" returned the other. "Something of moment must have sent our lengthy friend this way, for he is a man who knows how to obey orders," and he spurred forward to meet the footman.

"Wall, Captain," was 'Siah's greeting, squinting around the horseman at the long column of marching men, "you look like you had a slather of folks yonder. I guess there'll be something in the wind around Old Ti 'fore long, hey?"

"And how is it you are not there, Bolderwood?" demanded Warner.

"Wall, I got an idee into my noddle an' leavin' Smith and Brown to watch Old Ti, for it might run away 'fore ye git there, ye know, I trotted down this way ter see the Colonel. Ev'rything is safe there so fur, but there's one thing we've neglected."

"What is that, Bolderwood?" cried Allen, riding up and hearing this last sentence.

"Why, Colonel, although I count you as

purty near ekal to 'most anything, an' them fellers behind ye seemed armed to deal with any foe, still I calkerlate you ain't expectin' ol' Champlain ter open for ye to pass over dry shod, hey?"

Allen smote his thigh with his gauntleted hand and the expression on his face changed. "Right, 'Siah! I can't forgive myself for my thoughtlessness. We must have boats—and plenty of them—to cross to the fort."

"That's what struck me last night, Colonel. So I left the others ter watch the fort—an' a sarpint that wriggled into aour han's yesterday—and come kitin' down here for orders."

"A serpent, 'Siah?" said Warner. "Who is it?"

"One o' them Yorkers, an' one that I've not had my eyes on—let alone my hands—for a good many months. An' I see a chap behind you there that'll be some interested in meeting the rascal, too."

'Siah had looked past the officers and, in the very front rank, caught sight of his young friend Enoch. The latter waved his hand to the tall woodsman and Bolderwood, knowing that discipline was lax on the march, beck-

oned Enoch forward. "Come here, youngster, and hear what news I've got for ye," he cried. But Allen caught at the matter instantly, and understood to whom Bolderwood referred by his appellation of "the serpent."

"You mean to say you've got Simon Halpen?" he asked.

"That's the identical sarpint, Colonel," declared the ranger. "We caught him tryin' ter cross to Old Ti and thought it was best, under the sarcumstances, ter keep him close till this leetle business is over. What he was doin' riskin' his carcass on this side of the line is more'n I can tell——"

"The boy was right, Major!" exclaimed Allen, turning to Warner. "Harding met the fellow while he was stirring up our folks in the Otter country last week. He thought he was up to some rascality then, and the fellow did try to take his life."

"Tried it again, did he?" cried 'Siah, as Enoch approached. "Is that so, Nuck?"

Enoch repeated his adventure with the murderous Halpen. "If I'd knowed this," the ranger declared, "I'd saved the grub the scoundrel is eating."

"We'll make an example of him when we reach the lake, 'Siah," declared the leader of the Green Mountain Boys. "But now for this other matter. It is most important. Every bateau within reach must be secured."

"I know where there are three of 'em. And there may be others down the lake furder."

"You shall have charge of this, Bolderwood!" the commander cried. "I make you our captain of scouts. Take any reasonable number of men with you and hurry ahead. Every moment is precious."

"Good!" said the ranger. "With Smith and Brown I won't need but eight or ten more. And I'll begin by taking young Nuck here. He's a good oar."

"Take whom you wish. We depend on you," replied Allen, and within the hour the ranger and his party, including Enoch Harding, set off on their mission ahead of the more slowly moving army.

CHAPTER XXI

THE ESCAPE OF THE SPY

In sixteen hours 'Siah Bolderwood had traveled from his camp on the shore of Lake Champlain opposite the frowning walls of Fort Ticonderoga; when the long ranger was in a hurry he did not spare himself. Perhaps no other man in the Vermont wilderness could have covered so much ground afoot as he, within the time. But he set off now on his return journey, with nearly a dozen men at his heels, as fresh as though he had rested for a night instead of for an hour. His muscles were seemingly of steel and his limbs of iron. He led at such a pace that Enoch Harding, who came first behind him, could scarcely keep up with his stride and place his feet, Indian fashion, in the prints of his friend's moccasins.

The company of scouts traveled in single file and, having no need to follow the wood-road on which the army was marching, they

soon left that out of view. 'Siah found an Indian path which suited him far better than the broader trail, for it would bring them much sooner to the lake, and for hour after hour he strode on with scarce a look behind him to see how his companions kept up. The men he had chosen, save Enoch, were tried and trained woodsmen, with powers of endurance second only to his own. And as for the lad whom he loved, he knew his high spirit and pride. Enoch Harding would not fall behind until the last ounce of his strength had been expended.

Finally the party reached a little stream and here the leader gave the signal to halt. Enoch flung himself down on the short sward and fell asleep almost instantly. 'Siah looked down upon him in some pride. "That's the stuff we make men of in this country," he said aloud. "I knew his father as well as I know myself. The lad will be another Jonas Harding."

"He'll hold us back if we've to keep up this pace, 'Siah," said one of the others, doubtfully.

"Nay, you're mistaken there, neighbor.

You and I will travel until we feel that it ain't best for us to go any furder. Enoch'll keep up till he drops. He won't hold us back."

And it was true. Others of the party cried "enough!" before the afternoon was over; but the youth, his lips pale and compressed and the perspiration fairly pouring from his limbs, would have died before he acknowledged that the pace was too great for him. At night 'Siah called another halt and they ate heartily of such provisions as they carried and then lay down to rest. But 'Siah arranged for a guard. They were nearing the lake now and some ill-affected settler (there were several families of Tories near Champlain) might see them and wonder what such a large party of armed men was doing here. If the news of the approach of the main army did not travel ahead, it would be more because of good fortune than good management.

The party broke up into groups of two and three in the morning and went different ways to the shore. It was agreed that, where the settlers who owned boats were known to be

staunch Whigs, it would be safe to tell them for what purpose their crafts were needed. But several boats were owned by Tories and royalist sympathizers and these people must be deceived for, although the scouts were doubtless well armed and determined enough to take the boats without saying "by your leave," such a proceeding might be disastrous to the expedition.

'Siah Bolderwood chose Enoch as his companion and went himself toward the home of a farmer who stoutly upheld the King and his ministers and who had, in fact, held the title of his land from New York through all the years of trouble between his neighbors and the Albany courts. His homestead, however, was in such an out-of-the-way place and so secluded that the Green Mountain Boys had left him unmolested. Now Bolderwood was determined to have the roomy canoe and a large bateau which he was known to possess.

"But if the pesky critter gits an inkling of what we're up to, he'll start for Old Ti—that he will!" the ranger said to Enoch. "We gotter get around him somehow. An' you leave it ter me. Ye better keep aout o' sight,

I reckon, anyway; numbers might make the ol' codger suspicious."

So Enoch hid in the wood surrounding the clearing on the lake shore while his tall friend went toward the Tory's door. The old man, who depended upon his nephew and a slave or two to do his work, was sitting looking out across the lake. He was too far away to distinguish the battlements of Ticonderoga, but he happened to be looking in that direction when Bolderwood presented himself. "Neighbor!" said the latter, in a most friendly tone, "ye look hearty. What's the news?"

"Humph!" grunted the old man, staring at the Yankee shrewdly, "you're the feller that's been clearin' land above us yander, ain't ye?"

"That I can't deny, sir," responded the ranger. "An' jest for the sake o' bein' neighborly, I'm down here ter arsk a favor."

"What is it?" grunted the old man, doubtfully.

"Why, my partner an' me have got a job to do, an' we're wantin' ter borry one or both o' your boats," and he pointed down to the water where, at the end of a little dock, the big flatboat

and a long canoe were both moored. The old man could not see the boats without rising, but this he did as though to make sure that they were in their places. "What ye want 'em for?" he asked. "An' howsumever, I can't lend ye more than one o' them. We might want the other ourselves."

"What for?" asked Bolderwood, with the usual freedom of the community, and likewise proving himself a true Yankee by responding to one question with another.

"Might wanter go acrosst," said the farmer. "They say there's goin' ter be a lot o' reinforcements come up to Old Ti an' my nevvy and I want to see 'em when they come."

"That's what we're wantin' the boats for—to go acrosst to the fort," said 'Siah, with apparent frankness. "We've got some things to take over an' it's too fur to swim."

"I sh'd say it was!" exclaimed the Tory. "Then I take it the report that reinforcements air comin' is true? Captain De la Place is buyin' cattle to feed the garrison?"

"I reckon he'll need a good many to feed all that's comin'," returned Bolderwood, noncommittingly.

"Wall, I can't lend ye both, sir," declared the old man. "The canoe wouldn't do ye much good, though 'tis a master big one. Seems ter me there's a good deal o' boatin' on the lake to-day. I seen two barges go along north a'ready. Folks goin' fishin' I s'pose."

"Like enough—like enough," declared 'Siah hastily. "I'll git right down and take the bateau."

"Ain't ye got no one ter help ye?"

"I'll find my partner somewhere up the lake. He was lookin' for boats, too," returned the ranger.

He started to descend the bank and the old farmer arose and hobbled after him. The instant he reached the brink where he could again see his little dock, he gave voice to an exclamation of disgust and anger. "There it be! That Pomp is the most no 'count critter that ever eat smoked hog. He was a usin' that canoe this mornin', an' now look at it!"

Seemingly the big canoe had slipped her moorings and was floating rapidly around the wooded point near the dock. 'Siah might have been astonished a little himself had he not had sharper eyes than the Tory. He saw

that several articles of apparel lay in the canoe and he recognized Enoch Harding's old otter-skin cap. "Hold on, sir!" he cried. "No matter about calling your hands from the field to git it. I'll have that canoe in a jiffy."

He ran down the steep bank, unfastened the bateau, and with a powerful shove sent it out into the lake. There were two long sweeps aboard and with one of these 'Siah quickly propelled the heavy craft in the same direction as the canoe—down the lake. The latter craft was scarcely out of sight of the old man when the bateau came along side. There was nothing showing of the swimmer but his head and one hand which clutched the painter.

"Come aboard here, ye young rascal!" exclaimed the woodsman, with a chuckle. "You'll have that whole spatter of Tories arter us. Couldn't you hide your clothes better 'n that? Might have left 'em ashore. If the old gentleman hadn't been blinder'n a bat at midday, he'd seen 'em."

"I didn't think of that," Enoch admitted, rather ruefully, climbing over the bow of the

canoe and then passing the thong to 'Siah, who fastened it to the stern of the bateau. "I heard him say you couldn't have both, and I thought it too bad. This canoe will hold a dozen men."

"Wall, grab that sweep. Never mind your clothes just now. I warrant ye'll keep warm enough till we git to the camp."

The newly made captain of scouts and his young companion were by no means the first to reach the rendezvous on the shore opposite Ticonderoga. Nor is it to be supposed that the boats being there collected were brought boldly up in daylight. They were hidden in little coves near by, which could be reached by the scouts without attracting attention from the fort, to be brought after dark to the landing from which Ethan Allen expected to embark his troops. There were but two craft moored opposite the camp which Bolderwood and his companions had occupied for more than a week. Bolderwood held the title of a long strip of land along the lake shore, but he had never built a cabin. A shack, or hut, of branches was all the shelter the trio enjoyed.

Here the ranger and Enoch found several

of their friends beside Smith and Brown in waiting. The shore of the lake on this side had been fairly scoured for bateaus. They dared not cross to the New York side to obtain boats, for by so doing they would be sure to excite suspicion. With those already obtained and some which their companions were now gone for, the expedition must be content. The one mistake of their bold leader might bring about failure to the enterprise; yet so confident were they in Ethan Allen's ability that they firmly believed he would find some way to overcome the lack of transportation. The forced march of the scouts the day before, and for a good share of the night as well, had brought them to the lake long before the expedition itself could possibly reach the landing. Besides, the leaders would hold back until after dark. The attack upon the fortress must be accomplished under the cover of night. Bolderwood hoped, when he saw the meagre provision he was able to make for transportation, that the army would arrive early enough to allow of two, and even three, voyages to be made from shore to shore, that the entire force might take part in the attack.

To Enoch, however, there was another matter of grave interest to be attended to when he and his tall friend arrived at the temporary camp. He wished to see the spy whom Bolderwood had mentioned to Ethan Allen. The ranger, too, looked sharply about the camp for the man. "Where's that slippery critter we captured the other night?" he asked. "If he gits away before Colonel Allen comes there'll be trouble for some of us."

"We'd better have hung him up and so saved his food," grunted Brown, who, because the Yorkers had burned his house and driven his wife and children into the forest, had no love for anybody from the west side of the lake.

"You haven't let him go?" demanded Bolderwood.

"Nay, 'Siah. He's safe enough," returned Smith. "He's yonder behind the camp. He'd be an eel or a sarpint to wriggle out of them thongs."

"A sarpint he is," declared Bolderwood, and strode away to look at the prisoner. Enoch followed him. There, sitting with his back against a tree, his ankles fastened to-

gether and a strong deer thong wrapped about his body and about the tree itself, was Simon Halpen. When he saw the ranger he scowled. When he observed the boy, however, his eyes flashed and the blood rushed to his face. "I reckon he knows ye, Nuck," said the ranger.

"What are you going to do with me?" demanded the Yorker, with bravado. "You'll all suffer for this outrage, I promise ye! Wait until I get to Albany ——"

"And you ever see Albany again you're a lucky man," said Bolderwood, satisfying himself that the bonds were tight. "The Colonel will see to ye, my fine bird."

Enoch still remained before his enemy when the ranger went back to the camp. The villain returned his glance boldly. "You are satisfied now, I suppose?" he muttered.

"Not yet," replied young Harding.

"I shall be avenged!" declared Halpen, with a burst of wrath. "If I am injured I have powerful friends who will punish you. I care nothing for Ethan Allen ——"

"A power higher than Colonel Allen will punish you," Enoch said, gravely.

"Pooh! I care nothing for your Whig courts. You had best do what you can for me, Master Harding."

"I will leave you to the punishment you deserve. And you will receive it."

"What have I done, I'd like to know?" exclaimed the prisoner. "It was not my fault that your house was burned and your mother and you placed in danger of your lives. It was a mistake."

"Was it a mistake when you crept to my camp the other night and fired at me as I lay sleeping beside the fire?" demanded the boy, sternly.

The red flush left the prisoner's cheek then. "What—what do you mean?" he gasped.

"You know well what I mean. See here!" Enoch showed him the hole in the breast of his coat. "That was made by your bullet."

"The boy's life is charmed!" muttered Halpen.

"You had much better have used your gun-stock, Master Halpen. You would have been surer to kill me then."

At this an expression of positive terror came into the prisoner's features. "I am not

a murderer," he exclaimed. "You are mistaken if you think that I fired at you."

"It is true I cannot prove it," Enoch replied. "But something else I can prove." He advanced a step nearer to the man. "Do you remember where you hid the moose hoofs, Simon Halpen?"

The prisoner shrank back against the tree and his eyes fairly glared up at the youth. "You—you——" he gasped.

"Yes. They are found. We now know how my poor father was killed. And you were seen running from the place with his blood upon your clothes and upon your gun. Even your Albany courts would punish you for that!" Then the boy, unable to trust himself longer in the presence of the man who had so injured him, hastily left the spot.

And the prisoner—how did he feel while tied to that tree, waiting for the judgment which was to fall upon him for his crimes? No human being but the criminal himself can ever appreciate half the agony of the condemned. It was long since discovered that the gift of speech was given man to conceal his thoughts. To the man of strong will the

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face is a mask to conceal his feelings. And Simon Halpen was not a weakling. He may have betrayed some emotion when accused by Enoch ; it was a small part only of what he felt.

He saw now, as plainly as he saw the lengthening shadows about him, that punishment for his crimes was near. These stern woodsmen, whose plan for attacking Ticonderoga he had discovered, were in no mood to trifle with him. And what Enoch had told him was an assurance that though he might live to be brought before a court of justice, he must stand trial for his crimes. Neither political influence nor his wealth could save him from the result of his offenses against the laws of man and God. He was made desperate by these thoughts.

He could see from his uncomfortable position the company of scouts busy with their supper. The ordinary observer would not have imagined that these men were the pioneers of two hundred and thirty Green Mountain Boys and the Massachusetts and Connecticut troops. But Halpen knew the army of Americans was coming, and the object of their approach. Unwarned, Captain

De la Place and his garrison might be surprised and overwhelmed by these backwoodsmen. Halpen had no particular love for the King, nor for the royal government; but he hated these men who had defended their farms for so many years from the aggressions of his own party. Fear of punishment was reinforced by a desire to worst the Green Mountain Boys. He began to struggle against his bonds.

He had done that early in the day when he was first fastened to the tree; and the thongs had cut into his arms and breast. But now he felt these abrasions not at all. He was mad to be free, and free he would be! The scouts paid him no attention. The sun was set and the forest grew dark. Would he escape he must accomplish the matter soon, or likely Bolderwood or young Harding would come to examine him again, and then the chance would be past.

At last, his flesh cut so deeply that blood ran from arms and body, he stretched the hide rope until he was able to wriggle out of it. There were then his ankles to untie. This he did in a very few moments. He was

free! Rising to his knees, his limbs were so paralyzed by inaction that he could not yet stand upright, he crept into the brush and, like the serpent that Bolderwood declared to be his prototype, glided away from the camp and down toward the brush-bordered shore of the lake.

CHAPTER XXII

THE END OF SIMON HALPEN

As they are to-day, the surroundings of Fort Ticonderoga were most picturesque. Nor is the country about the fortifications, and across the lake where the camp of Bolderwood's scouts was established at the time of our story, and later where the Grenadier Battery was raised, much more thickly settled to-day than it was then. Mt. Defiance, south of the Lake George outlet on the west side of Champlain was a heavily wooded eminence. Behind the scouts' camp a rugged shoulder of ground, later called Mount Independence, raised its bulk out of the surrounding forest. The formidable promontory on which the French had built Ticonderoga twenty years before, commanded a great sweep of the lake. For mere foot-soldiers, without artillery or explosives, to attack these fortifications seemed utterly preposterous.

Where Bolderwood and his companions were waiting they had an excellent view of

the fort. At sunset the garrison was paraded and one gun boomed resonantly across the calm lake. Just before it became too dark to see the other shore, the Americans observed a man come out of the covered way by which the fortifications were entered and approach the shore. There was a light canoe moored there and into this he stepped and paddled out into the lake, evidently aiming his craft for a cove near the scouts' position. Bolderwood and his comrades were so deeply interested in the maneuvres of this man that Simon Halpen was for the time forgotten.

"We'll have to take that feller in and hold him for the Colonel to talk to," suggested one of the scouts when it became apparent that the stranger from the fort was coming ashore near at hand. "He'll see them boats an' suspicion something."

"We'll meet him," said Bolderwood; "but I'm reck'ning that he'll be as glad to see the Colonel as the Colonel is ter see him. I know that somebody was over there in the fort to find out how the land lies and what sort o' shape them red-coats is in, an' 'twouldn't s'prise me if this was the chap."

They all followed 'Siah down to the cove—even Enoch—and met the stranger as he came ashore. The latter seemed in nowise troubled by seeing so many armed men and after mooring his canoe came at once to the group of Americans. "Friends, I presume, sirs?" he asked, glancing keenly from man to man.

"Reckon so," admitted Bolderwood.

"Where is Colonel Allen?"

"If you don't mind waitin' with us I shouldn't be s'prised if ye see him 'fore long," declared the long-legged scout. "Wanter see him pertic'lar?"

"I do," the stranger admitted. "You are the advance guard of our boys, I presume?"

"Well, as you don't know us, an' we don't know you, we'd better not discuss private matters till we're interduced, as ye might say. I sh'dn't be astonished ter see the Colonel come along here 'most any time now."

"Very well, sir. I am at your service," was the response, and the newcomer walked back to the camp with them. But Enoch had gone on ahead, remembering that the

captive had been left alone for nearly half an hour. Suddenly his voice rose in a shout of anger and surprise. "He has escaped!" cried Bolderwood, the instant he heard his young friend, and plunged at once into the wood toward the spot where Halpen had been tied. Truly, the spy was gone.

"The rascal was sharper than I thought," gasped the ranger. "And—and what will Colonel Allen say?"

"That isn't the worst of it," declared the youth.

"Yes; you think it is worse that a villain like him should escape without punishment. I doubt not that Ethan Allen would have hung him."

"He may have deserved hanging," Enoch returned, with a shudder. "But I am not thinking of that. I fear that he will yet do us harm. If he gets across the lake and warns the folks at Old Ti, I'll never forgive myself for not sitting down here and watching him all the time."

"He sartainly should have been watched," admitted 'Siah. "But I didn't b'lieve he had the pluck to git away. See here! The

thongs are wet with the man's blood. He must ha' cut himself badly"

"We must find him, 'Siah! If he secures a boat and crosses the lake the expedition will be ruined. This man who has just come across declares Captain De la Place knows nothing about our army as yet. But if Simon Halpen reaches the fortifications ——"

'Siah rushed back to his company and sent them to search the bank of the lake. He ordered, too, one man to remain with each group of boats so that the escaped spy might not secure one and get such a start across the lake that he could not be overtaken. But it had now grown quite dark and the scouts were unable to find Halpen in the vicinity of the camp. 'Siah was confident that he and his men had obtained every craft on this eastern shore for miles up and down the lake, so he did not believe Halpen could really get across to the fort in time to warn the garrison. He was naturally too tender-hearted to wish to see the fellow hung to the nearest tree, which might be his fate had Ethan Allen examined him and found him guilty of spying upon the patriotic settlers.

Now that night had come and the darkness would have covered the movements of the American troops, as the head of the column did not appear, Bolderwood and his comrades began to fear that something had detained their friends and that the attack upon Ticonderoga might be postponed until the night of the tenth. How the fleet of bateaus and canoes could be held in the vicinity for many hours without suspicions being aroused as to their proposed use, was a question hard to answer. The captain of the scouts sent two of his men out upon the trail by which they expected Ethan Allen and the troops under him to advance.

Meanwhile Enoch Harding had not given up the search for the escaped spy. He feared what the fellow might yet do to weaken or utterly ruin the hopes of the American troops. Halpen was not armed, so the youth had no fear of being attacked by him; but he spent his time creeping through the brushwood up and down the lake shore, hoping to stumble upon the Yorker. He did not believe that Halpen had gone far from the encampment. Finally, in his wanderings, he came to the

cove where the scout who had spent the day inside the fort, had landed. The bateaus were on the other side of the cove; the canoe the scout had used was alone in the shadow of a big oak, although a sentinel watched the bateaus. This sentinel had neglected to remove the canoe to his side of the cove and as Enoch came down the hillside he observed something moving in the shadow of the oak. A moment later, before he was really sure whether this something was a man or an animal, the canoe left the bank. The trees threw their shadows upon the water and it was almost impossible to observe the moving craft clearly; yet he was pretty sure that there was a figure in it and that it had been unmoored.

The youth was too far away to risk a shot; the sentinel was much farther from the point of embarkation. If Simon Halpen had found and seized this canoe it looked for a moment as though he would surely escape.

Enoch ran down to the edge of the water, but when he reached the point at which the canoe had been moored it was almost out of sight. He could not see the figure in the boat

clearly enough to shoot. Indeed, he shrank from committing what seemed like murder. Simon Halpen was defenseless. "But he must not escape!" the boy exclaimed and started around the shore of the cove. The fugitive kept the canoe within the deep shadow of the trees which bordered the inlet. He did not paddle out into the centre; there he might have been seen by the sentinel on the other side.

The boy ran along the edge of the cove, stumbling over the tree roots and fallen logs, yet endeavoring to follow the course of the canoe as quietly as possible. There was a chance of his passing the fugitive and reaching the mouth of the cove first. Then, he thought, Halpen would be at his mercy. The better to do this unobserved he made a detour into the woods and finally, after ten minutes of rapid work, came out upon the extreme point which guarded the inlet. As he reached this place his quick ear distinguished the splash of a paddle not far away. Straining his eyes he soon observed through the gloom the canoe moving amid the shadows. The spy had very nearly escaped from the cove.

Once out in the open lake it would be impossible to overtake him.

Then Enoch wished he had aroused his comrades; at least the sentinel guarding the bateaus would have heard his cry and come to his assistance. But now if the spy was to be stopped it must be by his individual effort. Throwing down his rifle and removing his outside garments, he slid into the water with scarcely a ripple of its surface and finding the lake deep at this point, began to swim at once. The canoe was almost upon him when suddenly, with a muttered exclamation, the fugitive turned the craft by one swift stroke of the paddle and sent it darting away from the shore. Enoch had been seen or heard, and Halpen feared what was the fact—that one of his enemies was striving to overtake him.

Enoch flung himself forward in the water and with a strong overhand stroke took a diagonal course to intercept the canoe. He could see the man bending to his paddle. Every stroke of the blade sent the phosphorescent water flying about the frail bark. The next few moments were of vital importance to both pursued and pursuer.

Enoch's plunge into the water had driven Halpen to paddle away from the shore. Now he was heading the craft across the cove and therefore toward the station of the sentinel. If he pursued this course for many rods he would be within rifle shot. And once out of the shadow of the trees the light on the water would make him an easy mark. To pass Enoch before the latter reached the edge of the line of shadow was therefore Simon Halpen's object.

But the American youth was determined that Halpen should not do this. He was a strong swimmer and spurred by both the desire to recapture his enemy and to save the cause to which he was bound—the capture of Ticonderoga—he put forth every atom of his strength to overtake the canoe. The paddle flashed first upon one side, then on the other of the craft, which fairly darted through the water. But suddenly a hand and arm rose from the lake and seized the paddle just back of the blade. Enoch had dived under the surface and come up beside the canoe as Halpen was speeding past.

"Ha! would you do it?" gasped the spy,

striving to tear the paddle from the youth's grasp. The canoe rocked dangerously. The man flung himself to the other side and his superior strength wrenched the paddle away. Not contented to use the instrument in an attempt to escape, however, he tried to strike the youth with it. The canoe was all but overturned, although its momentum carried it on, and once out of Enoch's grasp the spy could have easily gotten away. Whether he recognized his enemy or not, Halpen was inclined to deliver a second blow. He rose to do this and Enoch, fairly leaping forward, seized the stern of the canoe with both hands.

"Throw down your paddle, Simon Halpen!" he commanded.

"It is you, then?" cried the spy, now sure of the identity of the youth. He aimed a fearful stroke at the boy's head. But instantly the latter tipped the canoe first one way, then the other, and the spy, losing his balance, plunged with a resounding splash into the lake!

The canoe turned completely over. This was not what Enoch wished, but the shock of Halpen's fall was so great that he could not

help it. The boy's desire had been to pitch the man out, get in himself, and then have the spy at his mercy. But chance—nay, Providence, for the man's sins had deserved death—willed otherwise.

Simon Halpen could not swim. In falling into the lake he even lost his grip upon the paddle. So, when he rose to the surface, he had nothing to cling to, but struggled wildly and cried out in fear. "Help! I am choking! I will drown!" His voice rose to a screech. An answering shout came from the distant shore where the sentinel was stationed. But the latter was too far away to render aid. If the spy was to be saved it depended upon the efforts of the youth whose father had died under Halpen's hand, and whose own life the scoundrel had twice sought.

At that fearful cry, however, Enoch launched himself at the sinking man. His head was already under water when the boy reached down and seized his collar. He brought him to the surface. The water gurgled from his throat and he breathed again. Had he been content to abandon himself to his rescuer then he would have been saved.

But terror rode him like a nightmare. He feared drowning; he feared, too, the enemy whom he would have killed had he been able the instant before. He could not appreciate the generous spirit which had prompted Enoch to come to his assistance. He thought the boy strove only to force him beneath the lake and he fought and screamed with passion and horror of imminent death.

"Be still! be still!" cried Enoch, well-nigh overcome himself by the mad actions of the man. "Lie quiet or I cannot save you. Be still!"

Halpen did not hear him; or, if he heard, he would not believe. He tore himself from Enoch's grasp, and as the youth tried to seize him again he struck out wildly and his fist found lodgment against Enoch's jaw. The blow stunned the latter and he sank. Halpen strove to reach the overturned canoe. It was too far away. He felt himself going down for a third time and his lungs were already half filled with water. A fearful scream rent the night—the last cry of a terrified soul going to its end—and he sank. He never rose to the surface after that third plunge beneath the lake.

CHAPTER XXIII

THE DAWN OF THE TENTH OF MAY

Enoch Harding, after a moment of breathless agony beneath the water, struggled to the air again. The blow he had received so dulled his senses that, had the canoe not fortunately been within the reach of his arm, he would have a second time gone down into the depths of the lake and possibly shared the fate of his enemy. But when his hand, flung out in that despair which is said to make a drowning person catch at even a straw, came in contact with the boat he seized it with a grip that could not be shaken. He had not the strength necessary to turn it over and to climb into the craft; but fortunately rescue was near.

The sentinel had heard the voices out upon the water, and Simon Halpen's despairing scream as he went down for the last time, echoed from the wooded bluffs and reached the ears of the other Green Mountain Boys in the neighborhood. The sentinel leaped into the big canoe which Enoch had that morning

secured from the Tory farmer up the lake, and paddled rapidly toward the mouth of the cove. He suspected at once that the escaped spy was trying to cross the lake and that some one of his brother scouts had discovered him.

Suddenly the rescuer saw the upturned canoe and the almost exhausted boy clinging to it. He drove his own craft alongside and reaching quickly seized Enoch's shoulder, bearing him up as the youth's own hands slipped from their resting-place on the keel of the canoe. "Courage—courage!" cried the scout, heartily. "You are not goin' down yet, Nuck Harding! Where's the other?"

"Gone—gone!" gasped Enoch, horrified by the death of Simon Halpen.

"Who was it?"

"The spy."

"Ah! I thought so. Well, we can't help the poor wretch now. Can you aid yourself at all? Brace up, man!"

"I'm—I'm all right," the youth declared, finally shaking off the feeling which had numbed him. "Let me get a grip on your boat—there! Now you can paddle ashore. I'll not lose my hold this time."

"Right it is, then." The rescuer paddled slowly toward the bateaus. When he came to the shore with the boy dragging behind him, Bolderwood and several other members of the company had arrived in answer to the expiring scream of the drowned Yorker. Upon hearing the explanation of the affair the chief scout's face became grave indeed. "The poor wretch has gone to his just desarts, I don't doubt," he said. "But so sudden—so sudden! It seems a turrible thing, friends, for a man to live the life he lived and then to go before his Maker without no preparation. He murdered poor Jonas Harding as sure as aigs is aigs, an' he tried twice ter kill the boy here, an' burned the widder's home. Yet I'd wished him time to make his peace with God. It's an awful affair. . . . But come!" he added, recovering himself, "there's something else to do now. We've got word from Colonel Allen. The troops are almost here. An' as good as we've done, there ain't ha'f enough boats to transport our boys across the lake."

"There may be more comin' from the north, 'Siah," suggested Brown. "Y' know ye sent some of the boys up that way this arternoon."

"Small hope o' their gettin' anything ——"

The chief scout's words were interrupted by a shout from one of the others. Around the point which defended the little cove a boat was appearing—or, rather, a lantern which betrayed the approach of a boat. "Here's another!" was the cry. "Here's Major Skeene's big bateau—an' Major Skeene's nigger, too!" as the loud and angry voice of a black man was heard across the calm water.

"The boys are having a hard time with our black-and-tan friend," said Bolderwood with a chuckle. Then he held up his hand for silence. "Hark! there's the ring of a horse's hoof—and the tramp of feet. The troops are coming."

With a rattle of accoutrements a cavalcade of horsemen descended the bluff to the tiny cove. Enoch recognized Colonel Allen, Major Warner, the stranger, Arnold, and Colonel Easton, the commander of the Massachusetts and Connecticut forces. "Praise the Lord, 'Siah!" cried the hearty voice of the Green Mountain leader. "We're arrived at last. 'Twas like a task of Hercules to get here. And the night is already far gone. Where are your boats, man?"

"The bulk of 'em are right here, Colonel. We ain't got what I wished; but we've taken 'em from friend and foe, and here comes the last of my boys with Major Skeene's big raft and, if I ain't mighty mistaken, with a bag o' charcoal aboard that must ha' caused 'em consider'ble trouble."

The voice of the negro, who was the property of one of the wealthiest royalists on the lake, became more and more vociferous as the bateau approached the shore. "Wot de goodness youse shakaroons doin' yere? We ain't goin' land yere—no, sir! Dis ain't no place fur us. Who yo' t'ink capen ob dis craft, anyway?"

"Oh, come along, old man! we wanter see ye!" shouted Bolderwood from the shore. "We won't eat ye up."

"Dis ain' no place for us, I tells yo'!" cried the darky, and as the outline of the bateau and the objects upon it were now visible, they could see the whites of his rolling eyes. "I ain' got nuttin' ter do wid yo' shakaroons."

"Come on, there!" shouted Allen. "Gag that black rascal if he doesn't talk less and use his sweeps well."

"Who dat say fur ter gag me?" demanded the black, his teeth chattering. "D'you knows who I is, sah? I'se Major Skeene's nigger, an' dis Major Skeene's bateau, an' we gotter load o' freight fo' de castle."

"We've got another sort of freight for you, my man," said the Green Mountain leader. "So come ashore here and have no more words about it."

"But dese yere gemmen say dey goin' fishin' an' git me ter lend 'em passage!" cried the darky, in despair.

"And so we are going fishing," cried Ethan Allen. "And you shall go, too, my black friend. But it will be different fishing from any that you've experienced before. Out with you, now!" he added, as the bateau grounded on the shore. "Get that freight off, men. What boats we have we must use at once. Perhaps they can be returned for another party to cross after us. I'll never forgive myself if this oversight makes a wreck of our expedition."

At that moment the man who, earlier in the evening, had crossed the lake from the fort, came and spoke to Ethan Allen. The leader

of the Americans listened attentively, slapping his thigh now and again with evident satisfaction as he heard the report of this faithful patriot who, as Allen had previously said, dared enter the lion's jaws. He had gone to Ticonderoga as a trader, had spent parts of two days in the fort, learning much that encouraged Allen in this desperate game he was playing. Although expecting additions to the garrison, Captain De la Place had not yet received the reinforcements. The buttresses of the fort, too, were in a sad state of repair. Indeed, since the British had swept the French from the lake, and with them driven the Hurons and Algonquins into the northern wilderness, few if any repairs had been made upon Ticonderoga. The British had simply held it as a storehouse and the garrison was small. If the American troops now gathering upon the eastern shore of Lake Champlain could once cross the water and approach the fort unperceived, there was hope in the hearts of all that the stronghold would be captured and the garrison overcome without any great loss of life.

"The God of Battles has been with ye!"

exclaimed Allen, when the man had finished his report. "And if He is with us, as I believe, yonder fort and all it contains shall be ours before sunrise. . . . But hasten! Tell Baker to bring up his troops. Bolderwood, you and your scouts must go over first with us. Colonel Arnold, you will come in my boat if you wish. Major Warner, I leave you to assist our good friend Easton. The boats shall return as soon as we have landed. Count the men who enter these boats, gentlemen. The lake is calm; but do not overload the craft. We desire no accident to delay our landing on the other side."

Enoch Harding kept close to his friend, the old ranger, and was therefore in one of the foremost boats. He was near Colonel Allen when word was passed to that brave leader that those in the boats numbered but eighty-three. "Eighty-three!" exclaimed the Green Mountain hero. "And every man worth three red-coats. Once we get within those walls and I'll answer for them. Yet, sirs, I would that we had not been so long delayed on the road, or that there were more bateaus to our hand."

"Shall the attack be given up—postponed till a more fitting occasion—if we cannot get more across?" asked Arnold.

"Postponed!" cried Allen, his face darkening. "And pray tell me, sir, how can it be postponed? With the dawn our troops will be observed upon both sides of the lake by those in the fort, or by Tories who will gladly run with warning to the red-coats. A blind kitten could see what we are about. Nay, Colonel Arnold; we have put our hands to the plough and we'll cut a deep furrow or none at all!"

The bold courage of their leader inspired the handful of men with actual belief in the successful outcome of the attack. There were no doubts expressed during the voyage across the lake. But when the landing was made, at the foot of the bluff on which the fort was built, the east was already streaked with pink. The dawn of the tenth of May, 1775—a day as marked in American history as any which we celebrate—was at hand. Less than a hundred patriotic Green Mountain Boys had disembarked from the boats under the shadow of Ticonderoga. With the rising of the sun

their presence would be discovered by the garrison of the fort, and once warned of their approach, the British could easily defend the works from any attack of infantry. Circumstances seemed to presage at that moment the defeat of the cause and utter humiliation of the participators in the proposed attack.

The boats had left the shore and were no longer to be descried, for a light fog covered the water. There was no retreat. To hide this party on the New York shore of the lake would be impossible. There were too many Tories about. Allen turned to his men. His voice was low, but intense, so that not only those around him, of which Enoch was one, but those at a distance heard every word uttered.

"Friends! we have come here for a single purpose. It is to advance upon yonder fortifications and capture them. We already outnumber the garrison; I have certain information upon this point. But our companions await on the other shore to be transported to this spot and join in our glorious work. In the east, however, is a warning we can all read. Before our friends can join us it will

be day. We shall be observed here; the garrison will be called to arms; our opportunity be lost. So, my brave companions, we cannot wait.

"I shall attack the fort at once. I force no man to an act which caution forbids. If any of you doubt, fall out of the ranks and make good your escape. But I am going forward and those who trust in God and to my leadership will advance at once!" He drew his sword and advanced a long stride before the column of anxious patriots. "Forward!" he cried, and inspired by the same spirit which animated their gallant leader, every Green Mountain Boy obeyed the command. They would have cheered, but the moment for anything of that kind was not opportune. The rising mist scarcely concealed the fortress above them.

With Colonel Arnold by his side the indomitable Allen climbed the slope and approached the covered way which led into the fort. Not a word was spoken. The sullen tramp of the column was all that broke the stillness of the dawn. The sentinel placed here to guard the entrance—a matter of mili-

tary rule rather than of precaution—leaned half asleep upon his musket. Had he been alert the approach of the troops must have been discovered ere they were visible. But Providence willed that he, together with all the garrison, should be totally unsuspicious of the planned attack of the provincials.

Suddenly, through the curling mist, appeared the head of the column. The sentinel started from his dream and, scarce understanding what he saw, advanced his musket, crying: "Halt! who goes there?"

The Americans accelerated their pace while Ethan Allen, whirling his sword above his head, shouted: "Forward!" The attacking force reached the mouth of the covered way at a double-quick. Repeating the command to halt the sentinel darted back, raised his weapon to his shoulder, and aiming full at the head of the commander of the Green Mountain Boys, pressed the trigger!

CHAPTER XXIV

THE GUNS OF OLD TI SPEAK

The fate of more than a brave man hung in the balance at that moment. The ultimate happiness and secure footing of a state was at stake when the sentinel pressed the trigger of his weapon. Had the ball reached its mark, the establishment of Vermont as a free state might have been postponed for many years. Ethan Allen's diplomacy in later dealing with the British agents who sought to wean Vermont from her federation with the struggling colonies, doubtless saved the Green Mountains from being overrun by a horde of Hessians and Indians who would have brought death and disaster to the patriotic settlers.

But Providence had other work for the leader of the Green Mountain Boys to do. The musket missed fire and flinging down the piece the sentinel turned and ran through the passage into the fort, shrieking that the enemy

was at hand. With a cheer the little band of patriots followed, and before the garrison was awake to its situation, the Green Mountain Boys had reached the parade. Instructed by their captains what to do, the men ran hither and thither to seize the guns whose threatening muzzles peered through the embrasures of the walls, and to guard the entrances to the barracks where the garrison slept.

'Siah Bolderwood, seizing an axe, attacked the door of the ammunition cellar; for the American spy who had spent the previous day within the works had explained to the ranger the situation of this important compartment. The ringing blows of the woodman's axe doubtless awakened many of the sleeping soldiery. In half a minute the stout oak door was down. "There, Nuck Harding!" cried the long ranger, "I leave you to guard that 'ere. If they show fight, fire your rifle into the place. If so be, we'll all go up together; but Old Ti is ourn and if we're driven forth we'll wreck the fortifications as we go."

Meanwhile Ethan Allen, knowing well the sleeping quarters of Captain De la Place,

having received his information from the same source as Bolderwood, leaped up the stairway to the apartment of the commander of the fort. His shoulder burst in the door without the loss of an instant, and he found the astounded captain sitting up in bed. "What is this, sir? Who are you?" cried the British officer.

"I call on ye to surrender, Captain De la Place!" cried the Green Mountain leader.

"In whose name do ye make this demand, sir?"

"In the name of the great Jehovah and the Continental Congress!" replied Allen, sternly. Then, describing a circle about his head with his sword, he added in a tone not to be mistaken: "I demand the surrender of your fort and all the stores and goods it may contain; and, sir, unless you comply with my demand and parade your men without arms at once, I'll send your head, sir, spinning across this floor!" and the whistling steel blade was advanced until the British officer shrank in fear.

"I surrender! I surrender!" he cried, and word was passed at once to both the garrison

and the Americans on the parade below. And thus the strongest British fortress within the borders of the disaffected colonies, capitulated to the American arms without a gun being fired. What if, when the news of the remarkable feat reached Philadelphia where the Continental Congress was in session, the act of Ethan Allen and his brave Green Mountain Boys was deplored, and a considerable party was for returning the stronghold to the king, while others wished to withdraw the American garrison, believing that the Champlain forts were too far on the frontier to be held successfully against the enemy? These suggestions were but the result of over-cautiousness on the part of some members of Congress. Happily their wishes were overborne and Ticonderoga remained an American fort until the cowardly St. Clair abandoned it before the advance of Burgoyne.

At the moment, however, the satisfaction of Ethan Allen and his brave companions was unbounded. While the British soldiers were being paraded without their weapons before their conquerors, a second body of Green Mountain Boys under Major Warner entered

the fort. The tall Connecticut man came to Allen with considerable chagrin expressed in his countenance. "Colonel, you have selfishly seized all the honors this time!" he cried, yet congratulating his friend with a warm handclasp. "You are a regular Achilles; there is nothing heroic for the rest of us to do."

"Nonsense—nonsense, Seth!" cried Ethan Allen, yet unable to hide his delight at the outcome of the attack. "There is glory enough for every officer and every man Jack in the ranks. There is yet Crown Point to capture and you, Major, shall command that expedition. Take Bolderwood and some of his scouts with you and approach the other fortress by water—and good fortune and my blessing go with you!"

A moment later the great guns of Old Ti began to speak. And they spoke a new tongue that morning. The Voice of Liberty as expressed by the resonant thunders of the old cannon echoed and reëchoed from height to height. The promontory which had been the scene of the bloody struggle between Champlain and the Iroquois, and the site of two fearful battles of the British and French, was

at length sanctified by the presence of this band of liberty loving men destined, through the next few years, to offer their lives and possessions on the altar of their country.

Then Warner and his men again embarked in the boats and sailed down the lake. Enoch Harding went with the expedition and saw the bloodless capitulation of the other British stronghold. Later, Benedict Arnold with a small command captured a British corvette farther down the lake and with that act the supremacy of the Americans on Champlain was assured. A garrison was placed in each fortress and then the Green Mountain Boys dispersed to their homes having accomplished the object for which they had been gathered by their leader. Enoch and the old ranger returned to the ox-bow farm where their welcome can be better imagined than narrated.

Yet the Widow Harding during the struggle which followed the capture of Ticonderoga made many sacrifices more noble even than that of allowing her eldest son to join in this expedition, but pioneer mothers were called upon so to do. Lot Breckenridge's mother had allowed her son to march away to Boston

where, under Israel Putman, he saw most active service during the campaign which finally drove the red-coats out of the Massachusetts capital. Robbie Baker was with his father when, while reconnoitering outside St. Johns, the Green Mountain sharpshooter was killed by an Indian ally of the British.

Enoch Harding, too, joined that ill-fated expedition into Canada where the rash attempt of Ethan Allen and his followers before Montreal resulted in the capture and imprisonment of the intrepid leader. Enoch, returning with the broken columns of the American army, but with a lieutenant's commission, was sent south and took no further part in the struggles about Lake Champlain. But Bryce, two years after the capture of Ticonderoga, well sustained the family name and honor while fighting with Stark at Bennington.

The girls and young Henry became their mother's sole support in her work of tilling the farm which Jonas Harding had cleared, and throughout the uncertain years of the Revolution the family continued to sow and reap, like so many other patriotic folk, that

the army might be clothed and fed while fighting the King's hirelings. Perhaps the part played by the "non-combatants" in the Revolution was not the least loyal nor the least helpful to the cause of liberty.

The war between the confederated states and Great Britain did not end the controversy regarding the rights of the settlers in the Hampshire Grants; it simply postponed the vexing matter. But in the end the freedom of Vermont as a state was brought about. After the war, and while the Thirteen States were endeavoring to bring order out of the chaotic conditions which had been the legacy of the great struggle, it was really New York herself that urged the admittance of Vermont into the Union. Even at that early date the supremacy of the South was feared, and when Kentucky applied for entrance to the Union, Vermont was made a state also to counteract the addition of another of southern sentiment.

During the war, however, the condition of Vermont was very precarious. It was due to Ethan Allen, as much as to any one man, that the Green Mountains and the Champlain Valley were not overrun with foes both white

and red. While imprisoned in the hulks in New York Bay Allen was approached by agents of the crown who strove to buy his good-will by presents and promises. They did not understand the rugged honesty of the Green Mountain Boy; but he, knowing the exposed situation of his friends and neighbors, craftily led his captors to believe that they might obtain Vermont and her sturdy people on their own side.

When Ethan Allen was exchanged and came back to the Green Mountains, he still, with other leaders, carefully watched the British agents and thus saved the rich farming lands of the Otter and Wonooski from bloodshed, that the patriot farmers might continue to plant and reap the grain which was truly "the sinews of war." It is true therefore that few leaders of the Revolution deserve greater commendation, for none displayed more consecrated courage, nor was more beloved by his followers, than the hero of Ticonderoga.